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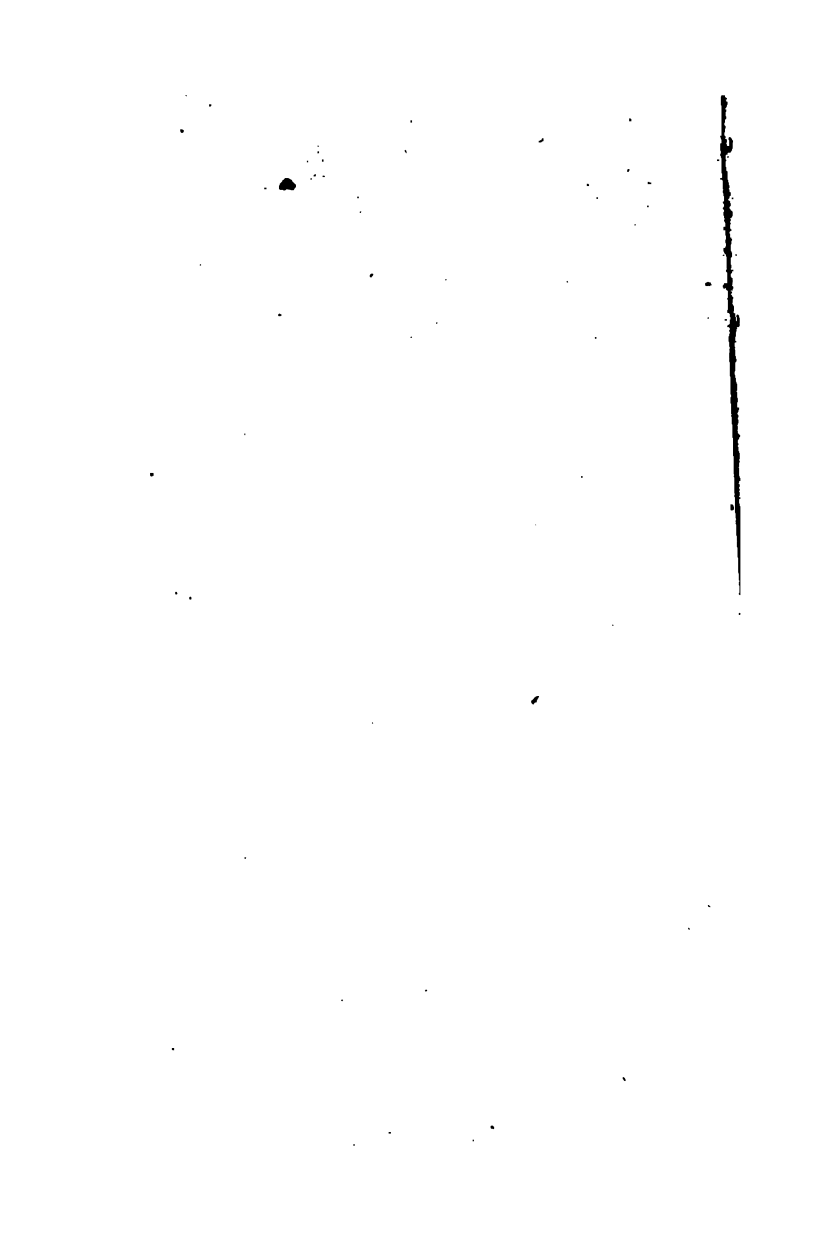


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Methodist Episcopal Church - U.S. - 1893

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# SKETCHES & INCIDENTS:

OR,

A BUDGET FROM THE SADDLE-BAGS

OF

A SUPERANNUATED ITINERANT.

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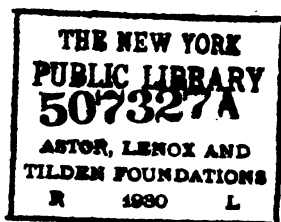
Abel Stevens

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## PREFACE.

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IN order to give the following sketches a slight aspect of unity, the author has adopted an arrangement which he hopes will not detract in the most scrupulous estimation from the general veracity of the work.

Though adapted to the Sunday School Library, it is chiefly designed for the advanced youth of the church; and the author would not dissemble that, in his matter and in his style, he has studied to meet the wants of this interesting class. While our denominational literature abounds in standard works for adults, and includes an excellent series for Sunday schools, it is comparatively destitute of such productions as have been furnished to the youth of the Calvinistic portion of the religious community, by Robert Philip, the



Messrs. Abbot, &c. The present publication, though of a widely different character, will be acceptable, it is hoped, to the same class of readers. Perhaps its more fragmentary form may serve its object. The author has sought to convey in these sketches important lessons, and to excite an affection for the character and institutions of the church. A few of them have already been extensively circulated in the religious prints. The interest which they have thus excited has encouraged their publication in the present form.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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IT pleased God early to honour the writer of these pages with a place in the itinerant ranks of the Methodist Episcopal Church. His travels have been extensive, imposing a little hard service, and affording many interesting recollections. It has been his happiness to know many of the fathers who composed the first itinerant band, the *legionans* (thundering legion) of the American church. Infirmities have compelled him to retire from the field; his war-horse sleeps under the sod of a distant prairie, and his shattered trumpet gives but a feeble and occasional note. His saddle-bags remain. They hang in his study before him while penning these lines; he can never part with them. They are fuller of reminiscences *than ever* they were of anything else, and if

God will, he wishes them placed under his head as a pillow when dying. To beguile the tedium of retirement and illness, he has written the following sketches, chiefly incidents of ministerial life. As they were written they were deposited in his old saddlebags until they accumulated to a considerable budget. They are now brought forth and presented to the reader : if they should afford him a lesson of warning or consolation, if they should produce one impression which shall survive the grave, the writer will be rewarded and thankful.

## SKETCHES AND INCIDENTS.

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### OLD JEDDY—THERE'S REST AT HOME.

*"There remaineth, therefore, a rest for the people of God."*—Paul.

I WAS preaching one Sunday afternoon in the door of a log cabin in the village of P——, to a congregation which filled the house and the front yard. When about half through the sermon, I observed an old negro riding alone toward the house. He dismounted, fastened his horse to a tree, and took his stand among the throng. The tears soon trickled down his furrowed cheeks, and it seemed impossible for him to repress some hearty exclamations. At the conclusion of the service he presented himself with profound reverence as my guide to Colonel M.'s, nineteen miles distant. It was my next appointment, and having just arrived on the circuit, I needed some guidance. I had already preached three times and rode twenty-three miles that day, and proposed to Jedediah, or Jeddy, as he was called, to tarry till the morning; but he replied that his master, the colonel,

insisted upon seeing me that evening. "Do go, massa," said Jeddy, "for no massa preacher be there for four months." I mounted to start, but Jeddy's horse was found too lame to return. The late rains had swept away a bridge on the only road, and rendered it necessary to take an indirect course through a boggy prairie, in order to cross the stream nearer its head. The horse had sprained one of his legs in a quicksand of this prairie, but Jeddy insisted on returning on foot.

We started into the prairie, but had not got far when I perceived that, owing to the wet state of the ground, we should not, at Jeddy's pace, reach our destination till the next morning. But, though slipping and tugging at almost every step, the good-hearted negro's large eyes gleamed with delight at the thought that he had induced the "massa preacher" to accompany him. I directed him to mount behind me: he seemed astonished at my kindness, and looked at me in silent amazement, but at last yielded to my request. By a little familiarity he became quite communicative. I led him into a recital of his whole history, particularly of his Christian experience. It was related with evident sincerity and deep emotion; the tears frequently *flowed from the old man's eyes*, and I could not

restrain my own; we wept together like children. Though jogging along in no very interesting plight, I felt that St. Paul's language was not inapplicable to us—God “hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

When we had passed the first nine miles, the night was falling fast, and, what was infinitely worse, we began to falter among these patches of quicksand so frequent and so dangerous in some of the western prairies. After plunging into a number of these, Jeddy dismounted, to relieve the danger by lessening the burden of the horse. We had not gone twenty rods further before the poor animal sunk above his knees in the mire, and only extricated himself by the utmost violence. Though accustomed to greater difficulties, the fatigues of the day had so affected me that I began to show less courage than the poor slave who guided me. Dismounting, I leaned wearily against my horse, and expressed a disposition to return rather than risk the perils and fatigues of the remaining distance.

“No, massa,” replied Jeddy, “be not discouraged, there be rest at home for you.”

There was something either in the tone of *Jeddy's* voice or my own mood of mind, which



gave the expression at once a double sense. "Yes," I involuntarily exclaimed, "thank God, there is a home for us, Jeddy, where the weary are at rest."

"O yes, massa," said the old labour-worn negro, as the tears started in his eyes, "me often tink of dat—me hopes to get dere some day."

"There is rest at home"—the sentence gave me new energy, and has often done so since, in many a harder trial.

We jogged along, but ever and anon were struggling in the bogs. Wearied at last, we sat down on a small protuberance of the prairie, too fatigued to proceed.

"How old are you, Jeddy?" I inquired.

"Seventy-three, massa; me be getting toward dat 'home,' massa."

"Have you a wife, Jeddy?" "Yes, massa; but me know not where she be: former massa love not God, and sold her far away." "Have you children?" "Yes, massa." "And where are they?" "All gone, too, massa, me know ~~not~~ where. But we all served God, massa, and hope to meet in dat home where be rest." The tears started afresh in the old man's eyes. I could inquire no further. My feelings overpowered me. What, thought I, are my suffer-

ings compared with those of this poor, sorrow-stricken servant of my Master!

"There is rest for us at home," said I involuntarily, and motioned to proceed. It was very dark, the rain was falling, and my horse limped with lameness. I was compelled to lead him by the bridle the remaining ten dreary miles. Through rain, and mud, and quicksands, we plodded on, nerved against them all by the thought which ever recurred with refreshing influence to my mind, that "there was rest for us at home." At last the glimmer of a distant light fell on our course. "Dat is home, massa," exclaimed Jeddy, with ecstasy.

So, I have often thought since then, gleams the light of hope over the valley and shadow of death to the Christian pilgrim.

I was received about midnight at the log cabin, wet and weary, yet as an angel of God. The table had been spread with everything good the house could afford for my refreshment. After many congratulations, a prayer and a song of praise, I laid me down to rest. *Rest*, thought I, what a sweet word! Never did I feel its significance more than in the slumbers of that night, sweetened as they were by beautiful visions of that better land where "*there remaineth a rest for the people of God.*" The

phrase of my aged guide wove itself into all my dreaming thoughts, and yet with such effect as not in the least to disturb my repose. At one time I thought I was reclining my head on the breast of a seraph, and dying—nay, it was falling asleep in Jesus—pervaded from head to foot with the most delicious sensations—a feeling of profound repose, which I never felt before nor since. At another I was gliding in the air, up over the hills, down into the valleys of heaven, without touching the soil, and wrapt in an unimaginable ecstasy—an ecstasy intense, and yet strangely tranquil. At another, I was sweetly sleeping under a leafy tree near one of its streams, on whose margin all varieties of flowers were bending and blushing, as if at the reflection of their own charms; and though asleep, yet it seemed that my eyes were open, drinking in all the indescribable scenery, while music, slow, sweet, and subdued by distance, flowed like a soft breeze of the south over my charmed spirit, and ever and anon a seraph glided by, smiling with unspeakable love, and uttering as he passed, “*Rest thee, brother,*” and leaving behind him a very wake of fragrance like the odour of June roses. These were fantasies, but how sweet were they!

*I rose the next morning with the freshness*

of youth, greeted by the sweet and ever-varying notes of a mocking-bird, which had perched on a tree over my chamber.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ten years had passed—years of much labour and sad changes in my history.—when I had occasion to visit a much more remote frontier settlement. I preached in a log school-house, to a congregation gathered from within twenty miles around. At the close of the discourse, a Mr. M. introduced himself to me as the son of my former host, Colonel M. The colonel had emancipated his slaves, and during a long period of sickness was converted, and died, it was believed, the death of the righteous. The son, indulging the characteristic propensity of the family, had advanced with the frontier line, and the old coloured servants, unwilling to disperse, had accompanied him, and were settled about him. One of them, he said, was not expected to live from hour to hour. We went immediately to the sick man's cabin; it was surrounded by coloured people, weeping like children for a father. On a bed in a corner lay the dying man. I approached to address him; his languid eye kindled, and in a moment there was a mutual recognition. It was old Jeddy. Need I tell the reader the effect on myself and on

the dying African? Leaning over the bed, and taking his hand, I asked, "Do you remember, Jeddy, the boggy prairie at ——?"

"O yes, massa; dat precious night," he replied, gasping for breath.

"Your pilgrimage is most ended. There's rest for you at home, Jeddy."

The old saint had not forgotten the phrase. His dying eye kindled anew, and in broken expressions he responded, "Yes, bless de Lord, massa, me most dere, me most home; me poor, old, weary servant, O very weary, but going home, going home." Tears of gratitude and joy expressed still more fully his thoughts. When he had nearly lost the power of speech, he continued to utter this phrase, and his last words were, "Rest—home!" He died about eleven o'clock that night, and I have no doubt that by the midnight hour he had passed through the "everlasting gates," and was hailed by seraphim amid the "excellent glory."

Often, while drooping under the fatigues and diseases of those wild regions—often, in laying my head on my saddle, to spend the night in the forest, have I recalled the phrase of Jeddy, "There's rest at home." There has been a spell of power in these words which no labour, *no peril*, has been able to dissipate.

Minister of God, wandering to and fro, without a resting place, to seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel, art thou at times weary? Dost thou long for a home and repose? Do thy little ones die in thy absence, and are their graves scattered in the land? Cheer thee, brother, thy home is above, and a rest remaineth for thee there.

Aged pilgrim, art thou bending over thy staff, like the patriarch "seeking a better country;" do thy aged limbs tremble on the way? Be of good courage, the difficult heights before thee are the "delectable mountains." Struggle on; thou art on the threshold of thy home: there is rest for thee there.

Afflicted saint, is it thy lot not to do, but suffer the will of thy Lord? Art thou weary and weak, and in pains; are weeks or months of languishing before thee? "Trust thou in the Lord for ever," for thy "light afflictions" are "but for a moment," compared with the "rest that remaineth" for thee. Suffer on, the end is at hand, when thou shalt "enter into his rest."

## WESLEY'S CHARACTER.

*"A prince and a great man in Israel."*—David.

I HAVE known few men who had greater ability in the discrimination of human character than Judge M.,—an ability which he had acquired as well by extensive biographical reading as by the study of life.

He had been reading Southey's *Life of Wesley*. "It is a most interesting production," said he, "but very unsatisfactory. Its style is a specimen of pure and vigorous English, and its materials are singularly rich, even romantic, but it lacks unity, and the final impression is vague. Some of the sketches of Wesley's 'helpers,' as they are called, would adorn the romances of chivalry; but I have received from the book no definite idea of Wesley himself."

I found, nevertheless, that the idea he had received, however indefinite, was not too favourable.

Watson's pungent and eloquent critique on Southey had just appeared. I sent it to him, accompanied with Moore's *Life of Wesley*. While reading them, he frequently sent to my library for other publications which were re-

ferred to by these writers, particularly the works of Wesley, Gillies, Whitefield, &c. On returning them, he expressed the interest he had felt in their perusal.

"I have never before," said he, "given so much attention to an ecclesiastical subject. Wesley's character is itself a study. To one who has not examined these works I should hesitate to express fully my estimate of him. He equalled Luther in energy and courage, while he excelled him in prudence and learning. He equalled Melancthon in learning and prudence, while he surpassed him in courage and energy; and there are few of the excellences of both the Wittenberg reformers which were not combined and transcended in his individual character.

"He possessed in an eminent degree one trait of a master mind—the power of comprehending at once the general outlines and the details of plans, the aggregate and the integrants. It is this power which forms the philosophical genius in science; it is indispensable to the successful commander and the great statesman. It is illustrated in the whole economical system of Methodism—a system which, while it fixes itself to the smallest locality with the utmost detail and tenacity, is



sufficiently general in its provisions to reach the ends of the world, and still maintain its unity of spirit and discipline.

“No man knew better than Wesley the importance of small things. You recollect that his whole financial system was based on weekly penny collections; and it was a rule of his preachers never to omit a single preaching appointment, except when the ‘risk of life or limb’ required. So far as I can judge, he was the first to apply extensively the plan of tract distribution. He wrote, printed, and scattered over the kingdom, placards on almost every topic of morals and religion. In addition to the usual services of the church, he introduced what you call the *band meeting*, the *class meeting*, the *prayer meeting*, the *love feast*, and the *watch night*. Not content with his itinerant labourers, he called into use the less available powers of his people, by establishing the departments of *local preachers*, *exhorters*, and *leaders*. It was, in fine, by gathering together fragments, by combining minutæ, that he formed that powerful system of spiritual means which is transcending all others in the evangelization of the world.

“It was not only in the theoretical construction of plans that Wesley excelled; he was, if

possible, still more distinguished by practical energy. The variety and number of his labours would be absolutely incredible to me with less authentic evidence than that which corroborates them. He was perpetually travelling and preaching, studying and writing, translating and abridging, superintending his societies, and applying his great plans. According to one of these authors, he travelled usually *five thousand* miles a year, preaching twice and thrice a day, commencing at five o'clock in the morning; and in all this incessant travelling and preaching he carried with him the studious and meditative habits of the philosopher. No department of human inquiry was omitted by him. 'History, poetry, and philosophy,' says he, 'I read on horseback.'

"Wesley, like Luther, knew the importance of the press; he kept it teeming with his publications, and his itinerant preachers were good agents for their circulation. And here [opening one of the volumes] is a sentence addressed to them on the subject which indicates his character:—'Carry them with you through every round; exert yourselves in this; be not ashamed, be not weary, leave no stone unturned.' His works, including abridgments and translations, amounted (if I estimate rightly) to

about two hundred volumes. These comprise treatises on almost every subject of divinity, poetry, music, history; natural, moral, metaphysical, and political philosophy. He wrote as he preached, *ad populum*, and he may indeed be considered the leader in those exertions which are now being made for the popular diffusion of knowledge.

" Differing from the usual character of men who are given to various exertions and many plans, he was accurate and profound. He was an adept in classical literature and the use of the classical tongues: his writings are adorned with their finest passages. He was familiar with a number of modern languages: and I consider his own style one of the best examples of strength and perspicuity among English writers. He seems to have been ready in every subject of learning and general literature. As a lecturer, he was remarkably clear and decisive.

" He was but little animated in those extempore and unprepared discourses in which his superior imagination shined. His temperance was warm, but not fervent. His modesty never appears undimmed, but always glowing in a more radiant light. His numerous duties were accomplished, not by the impulse of a transient

enthusiasm, but by the cool calculation of his plans, and the steady self-possession with which he pursued them. I like that maxim of his—‘Though I am always in haste, I am never in a hurry.’ He was as economical of his time as a miser could be of his gold; rising at four o’clock in the morning, and allotting to every hour its appropriate work. ‘Leisure and I have taken leave of each other,’ said he. And yet such was the happy arrangement of his employments, that amid a multiplicity which would distract an ordinary man, he declares that ‘there are few persons who spend so many hours secluded from all company as myself.’ The wonder of his character is the self-control by which he preserved himself calm, while he kept all in excitement around him.

“He was a contrast to Whitefield. Whitefield was born an orator. The qualities of the orator made up his whole genius; they were the first mental manifestations of his childhood, but were pent up in his heart, a magazine of energies, until kindled by the influence of religion, when they broke forth, like the fires of a volcano. He was a man of boundless soul. He was a host of generous sympathies; and every sympathy, in him, was a passion. This was, perhaps, the secret of his eloquence. The

Athenian orator said that action was eloquence. Perhaps antiquity has given undue authority to this remark. The pantomime is not eloquent; but strong passion always is, and always would be, had it the expression of neither hand nor feature, but the tremulous tones of the excited voice coming from an unseen source upon the ear. There is no eloquence without feeling. Even the histrionic orator must *feel*—not affect to feel, but, by giving himself up to the illusion of reality in ideal scenes, *actually* feel. Whitefield's whole Christian course showed the prevalence of mighty feelings.

“Whitefield was no legislator: he acted entirely without a system. Here was his great defect. Had he combined the contriving powers of Wesley with his own effective eloquence, it cannot be doubted that he would have occupied the high place of the latter, or, at least, a similar position in a separate sect holding the tenets of Calvinism. His powers of address were much more immediately effective than Wesley's; and if they had been applied to the establishment of a well-organized system, as were Wesley's, the result would have been immense. He moved like a comet, dazzling and amazing the world, but leaving scarcely a trace behind him. *Perhaps his capital fault was his sepa-*

ration from Wesley. He was certainly never designed by Providence to scatter so ineffectually his vast powers.

“ Wesley was the counterpart of Whitefield. They were raised up to co-operate in one great cause—the one to construct its plans, the other to vivify them with the electric powers of his genius. The one held on his due course, and the results of his steadfastness are still developing on a scale of unparalleled grandeur. The other deviated ; and almost the last vestige of his labours has passed away, or blended undistinguishably with the mass of the church.

“ Like the great men of old, Wesley was careful in his physical habits. Though of a feeble constitution, his regularity, sustained through great exertions and vicissitudes, produced a vigour and equanimity which are seldom the accompaniments of a laborious mind or of a distracted life. He somewhere says he does not remember to have felt lowness of spirits one quarter of an hour since he was born—that ten thousand cares are no more weight to his mind than ten thousand hairs are to his head—and that he never lost a night’s sleep in his life. Southey says, his face was remarkably fine, his complexion fresh to the last week of *his life*, and his eye quick, keen, and active.

“ One of the finest spectacles to me is the sight of an old man holding on his career of action or endurance to the extremity of life with an unwavering spirit. Such was Wesley. He ceased not his labours till death. After the eightieth year of his age he visited Holland twice. At the end of his eighty-second, he says, ‘ I am never tired either with writing, preaching, or travelling.’ He preached under trees which he had planted himself, at Kingswood. He outlived most of his first disciples and preachers, and stood up mighty in intellect and labours among the second and third generations of his people. I have been affected in reading the account of his later years, when persecution had subsided, and he was everywhere received as a patriarch, and sometimes, as his biographer says, he excited, by his arrival in towns and cities, an interest such as the king himself would produce. He attracted the largest assemblies, perhaps, which have been congregated for religious instruction since the ministry of Christ, being estimated sometimes at more than *thirty thousand*. Great intellectually, morally, and physically, he at length died, in the eighty-eighth year of his age, and sixty-fifth of his ministry, unquestionably one of the most *extraordinary men* of any age.

“ He lived to see Methodism spread through Great Britain, America, and the West India Islands. Nearly one hundred and forty thousand members, upward of five hundred itinerant preachers, and more than one thousand local preachers, were connected with him when he died. And how have these multiplied since ! The epitaph of Sir Christopher Wren, in St. Paul’s Cathedral, the work of his own genius, is applicable to Wesley’s memory in almost all the civilized world : ‘ *Do you ask for his monument ? Look around you.* ’ ”



## A VISION IN THE WILDERNESS.

*"It seemed a dream, and yet 'twas not."*

IN my long journeys in the West, I used frequently to rest during the heat of the noon-day under the shade of a tree, fastening my horse to one of its branches by a long rope, which afforded him ample room for grazing. After a hearty meal, of the famed "*hoe-cake*," furnished at my last stopping place, and eaten with a relish which nothing but hunger and travel can give, and offering up my tribute of praise to Him who guided my wanderings, I usually lay down on my travelling blanket, with my saddle for a pillow, and refreshed myself by a few hours' sleep. Reposing thus, with my pocket Bible in my hand, reading and meditating on the promises of God to his people, I once fell into a dreamy reverie, during which I imagined that all the illustrious of the church in former ages passed in slow procession before me.

First in the long train, and at considerable distance from the following groups, moved a venerable company, with silvered locks, and

elevated and wrinkled brows; their countenances were marked with an expression of blended gravity and simplicity, their staves were crooks, and their whole appearance indicated the simple habits of pastoral life. They were preceded by a figure of peculiar dignity, the rapt thoughtfulness of whose countenance bespoke a high communion with the spiritual world—a friendship with the Deity.

At a short distance in their rear followed one whose whole bearing was that of a stern, yet dignified consciousness of power. He bore in one hand a rod, and in the other a scroll. His brow seemed like bronze, and was marked with the lines of most profound and somewhat awful thought. I gazed on this ancient-looking group until the shadows of the foremost grew dim in the distance, when, turning my eye, my attention was immediately arrested by an exceedingly interesting company of more varied character, and at more irregular intervals from each other. They were male and female. Their countenances wore different expressions; some the calm dignity of collected thought, others a lofty majesty that seemed something more than human; some an affecting pathos and lonely sadness, while the features of others were radiant with the outbursts of ecstatic

emotion. All, however, had an indefinable correspondence. I was struck with an uplifted look of the eyes that was common to all, and imparted an aspect of sanctified inspiration.

The first in the group was a lovely female figure, whose graceful form appeared to glide along as if moving on the air; her hair waved in the breezes, and her countenance was an expression of blended beauty and holiness. It seemed illuminated with a radiance from heaven. In one hand she held above her head a timbrel, while with the other she struck it with enthusiasm. At a distance methought I heard her sing, "Awake, awake, Deborah; awake, awake, utter a song."

Next followed an unimpassioned, aged man, his eyes sunken, and his locks white like the snows of winter; mature thought and wise counsel sat on his visage, blended with a hallowed complacency that seemed to say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." He was followed by one who was robed in regal apparel, and whose head was circled with a crown. He appeared a prince of God's people, anointed from on high. His face shone with rapture as he moved buoyantly along, with a harp in his hand, *singing*, "O come, let us sing unto the Lord;

let us make a joyful noise unto the Rock of our salvation."

Then came one wrapped in a mantle, with a solemnity truly august; his beard was long and silvery; his eye, though sunken with age, gleamed with fire; and on his elevated, but indented brow, sat a solemn loftiness of thought. His motion was that of strong old age, and as he passed I heard him say, "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city."

In the same group I observed several other most interesting figures, some carrying harps, some rejoicing, some weeping. Among the latter, one particularly affected me. He seemed a man of God—his look was that of deep dejection, yet submissive and sanctified. He uttered as he passed, with a tone of affecting pathos, "O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!"

Many others of remarkable appearance were passing before me, but the sudden approach of another group at a distance drew away my attention. The first that caught my eye was a figure robed in camel's hair, with a leathern girdle about his loins; his face was weather-

worn, as if he were accustomed to an exposed life. His gait was dignified and grave; his voice, owing to the distance, was very indistinct, but, associated with his whole personal appearance, it was as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness." Then followed one whose step was slow and godlike. A singular combination of power and goodness was expressed in all his bearing. At one moment I thought it might be an impersonated image of greatness and might—and at another, of meekness and lowliness. An indescribable benignity shone on his features, and yet a cloud of sorrow seemed to wreath his brow, so that he appeared indeed "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

Then followed a company that could not so well be called a group as a file, owing to their great extent. The first seemed men of much simplicity of character, unpretending in their manners, but conscious of high powers and great responsibilities; a calm fearlessness was expressed in their countenances. Among them I observed two figures that particularly interested my attention; the first for his delightful complacency. His whole countenance beamed with amiable lowliness and compassion, and *he appeared to be uttering to himself as he*

passed, "God is love." The other looked accustomed to the patient and wearying toil of the laborious scholar. An expression of contemplative thoughtfulness was expanded over his brow. He appeared like one whose mind was pregnant with mighty thoughts, and who could stand unmoved in the integrity of his principles before the thrones of kings and amid the schools of philosophers. Though his countenance was that of a great man, yet it wore a holy humility that seemed to say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!" After the first few figures, the number increased rapidly, till it appeared like the hosts of war; their countenances bespoke heroic boldness and contempt of pain, as if they were familiar with perils and death—panoplied pilgrims, who have here no abiding place, but seek a city eternal in the heavens. After some hundreds had passed, the procession seemed to terminate, and dense darkness followed; dim, phantasmagoric figures, more like shapes of shadow than living beings, appeared for a moment, and then faded away in the gloom; but I continued to gaze anxiously for some new and more distinct appearance, when suddenly one emerged, wearing the cowl and girdle of a monk. In his hand he grasped a rusty

[illegible]

a thousand varied aspects of light and beauty. The host I was contemplating, now so numerous as to spread over the entire survey, cried aloud, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever," followed by a shout from heaven, saying, "Allelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!" at which I awoke, and lo, it was a dream!

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#### CHILDREN OF RELIGIOUS PARENTS.

*"Train up a child in the way he SHOULD go."*

Solomon.

My heart still bleeds when I recall the death-scene of my old friend W. He was a good man, and is no doubt at rest. He laboured usefully as a local preacher, and scores were converted from the error of their ways by his instrumentality; but of all his numerous children, only one daughter, who ministered as an angel at his sick bed, had acknowledged the name of Christ. Two of his sons had died in responsible years, without hope, one of them in agonies of despair: the spirit of the old man never recovered from the shock. Three were



still living; two, wandering he knew not where, the votaries of dissipation, the other confined in a neighbouring alms-house, a maniac. Seldom have I known an equal case of domestic affliction. He had educated his family in religion with all diligence, but was now dying, with the hope of meeting but one of them in heaven. The affections of the parent were naturally strong in him, but in his last sickness they were overpowering. "Pray for my children," was his pathetic appeal to the Christian friends who visited him—"O my children! My poor boys! I go down to the grave in sorrow for them. Must they be lost? Cannot prayer still pluck them as brands from the burning? Pray, O pray for my children!" The Christian parent alone can feel the force of this dying father's language, and even he cannot feel as I do, while recalling the unutterable anxiety of his emaciated features, bathed as they were with the tears of paternal tenderness. Ah! it is on the margin of eternity—it is when the soul, full of unspeakable solicitude, feels that it is passing returnlessly away, that the affections receive a depth of pathos they never had before. It is then, too, that we see things as they are;—valuable only so far as they relate to the endless state into which we are passing.

It is then, mistaken parent, that thou wilt wish to see thy child lying, with the hopes and woes of Lazarus, at the gate of the rich man, rather than enjoying, without God, the admiration or wealth for which thou art now so anxiously training it.

The old man expired, praying for his children, and his prayer was not altogether in vain ; for " God is not slack concerning his promises ;" and he has assured the Christian parent that " it shall be well with him, and his children after him ;" that " the generation of the upright shall be blessed." His poor maniac son has since been restored, and is now seen " sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind." His name is on the temperance pledge and the church book, and I trust it is " written in heaven." One of his brothers has also been reclaimed, and the other still lives, and is therefore within the reach of the many prayers which have ascended for him.

I have not introduced this case in order to sketch it, but to append a few thoughts on an important subject. It is an interesting question why the children of religious parents are so seldom converted, and not unfrequently are more hostile to religion than those who have *had no early religious training.* The reasons

usually assigned are, that they become disgusted with religion by the importunity of their parents; that severe early restraints become irksome, and react; that the imperfections which they observe in the domestic conduct of their relatives destroy their confidence, &c., &c. I doubt most of the usual reasoning on this subject. It may apply in particular cases, but it does not solve the whole problem. Where these defects have not existed, the result has been the same. The most painful examples I have known were in the families of devoted and judicious ministers, some of whose children, whom I can at this moment recall, are reeling to the grave drunkards. I think the reason lies deeper than is usually conjectured. There is a profound fault somewhere in our system of religious training. The constitution of the human mind requires the Scriptural mode of enforcing religion, and admits of no other, and this is not the mode adopted in the religious education of children. Let me explain.

We have two classes of habits, passive and active. The facility of the former is diminished, while that of the latter is increased, by exercise. The surgeon, in the beginning of his profession, may feel a painful sympathy for the sufferings of *his patient*. This very sympathy may un-

nerve his hand, and embarrass his operation. By familiarity with suffering his sympathies harden—the *passive* susceptibility abates, until the agonies of his writhing subject scarcely discompose his feelings. But with this decrease of feeling there is an increase of tact in the use of his instruments—the *active* habit is improved, so that the most unfeeling operators are generally the most accurate and secure. The experience of the drunkard is another example; in proportion as he advances in his vicious habit does his susceptibility of agreeable excitement diminish. The draught that at first intoxicated becomes powerless, and to have effect, must be increased as he advances.

This interesting law applies equally to our moral nature. Let an individual be passive, but inactive, amid the examples and admonitions of religion, and he will inevitably degenerate. So well known is this fact, that the popular language, without scrutinizing the reason, has characterized such as “gospel hardened.” The most thrilling appeals of truth fall on their ears like the breath of the wind, while others, a hundred-fold more debased in vice, but less accustomed to religious motives, quake with trembling. Now,\* does not this consideration explain the irreligion of the children of religious

parents? They witness constantly examples of religion, but is it the case that parents *labour directly* for their conversion? It is to be feared that *direct efforts* for the salvation of children are rare. We teach them its doctrines, and discipline them to some of its moralities, but do we treat them as the *gospel treats sinners*—urging them to immediate repentance and faith as the means of regeneration and the ground of all true practical virtue? I have often thought, in my observations on Christian families, that the indirectness with which religious impressions were made was exactly adapted to habituate the mind to easy resistance. Witnessing daily the examples of religion without any active participation in them, they are preparing either to doubt and despise all religion, or hang on our congregations lifeless moralists.

Our religious feelings must be active, or they will decline. Like the vigour of the body, they depend upon exercise. Nothing could more effectually benumb the heart of a philanthropist, than to observe daily the miseries of the suffering without an effort to relieve them.

Let not, then, the Christian parent try to introduce his child to religion by a gradual process of discipline—this is good in its place—but let *him first teach* and urge an immediate renewal

of the heart—the same as is necessary in an adult sinner, for sin is as radical in the nature of a child as in that of a man of threescore years and ten—and then, being introduced to the active habits of religion, both inward and outward, they will grow with its growth.

These thoughts suggest an admonition to the children of religious families. How great are their privileges! The light of heaven shines upon their infant brows in the very cradle. Their house is a miniature sanctuary, with its altar of morning and evening sacrifice. The oracles of truth speak to them daily with wiser counsels than angels could utter. The sweetest affections of life are made to them vehicles of religious influence. How can it be possible for a child to grow up in habitual resistance of all these appeals, and not suffer seriously in his moral susceptibility? His heart must become indurated. These blessings will be either a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death.

Child of many prayers! thou art blessed indeed; but O! be warned that thy mercies turn not to curses, and that the sweet memories of thy home be not imbittered through eternity.

## THE DUEL.

*"Blood-guiltiness !"*—Psalmist.

ABOUT four miles from N—— is an extensive grove, well known as the scene of several fatal duels. As I passed it one morning on my way to my appointment in that town, I perceived a horse and vehicle among the trees, guarded by a solitary man, who appeared to be the driver. My suspicions were immediately aroused, but I rode on.

About a mile beyond I met another carriage, containing four persons, besides the driver, and hastening with all speed. My fears were confirmed, and I could scarcely doubt that another scene of blood was about to be enacted in those quiet solitudes. What was my duty in the case? I knew too well the tenacity of those fictitious and absurd sentiments of honour which prevailed in that section of the country, and which gave to the duel a character of exalted chivalry, to hope that my interference could be successful; yet, thought I, it is my duty to rebuke the sin, if I cannot prevent it, and in the name of my Lord I will do it. As quick as the thought, I wheeled about, and returned with the utmost speed to the grove.

The second carriage had arrived, and was fastened to a tree. I rode up to it, fastened my horse near it, and throwing the driver a piece of silver, requested him to guard him. While threading my way into the forest, my thoughts were intensely agitated to know how to present myself most successfully. The occasion admitted of no delay. I hastened on, and soon emerged into an oval space surrounded on all sides by the dense woods. At the opposite extremities stood the principals, their boots drawn over their pantaloons, their coats, vests, and hats off, and with handkerchiefs tied over their heads, and tightly belting their waists. A friend and a surgeon were conversing with each, while the seconds were about midway between them, arranging the dreadful conflict. One of the principals, the challenged, appeared but about twenty years old; his countenance was singularly expressive of sensibility, but also of cool determination. The other had a stout, ruffian-like bearing, a countenance easy, but sinister and heartless, and seemed impatient to wreak his vengeance on his antagonist.

I advanced immediately to the seconds, and declared at once my character and my object. "Gentlemen," said I, "excuse my intrusion; I *am* a minister of the gospel; I know not the



merits of this quarrel, but both my heart and my office require me to mediate a peace between the parties, if possible. Is it not possible?"

"Sir," replied one of them, "the utmost has been done to effect it, without success, and this is no place for further attempts."

"Under any circumstances, in any place, gentlemen," I replied, "it is appropriate to prevent murder, and such, in the sight of God, is the deed you are aiding. It must not be, gentlemen: in the name of the law, which prohibits it—in the name of your friends, the principals—in the name of God, who looks upon you in this solitary place, I beseech you, stop it at once; at least, wash your own hands from the blood of these men; retire from the field, and refuse to assist in their mutual murder."

My emphatic remonstrance had a momentary effect; they seemed not indisposed to come to terms, if I could get the concurrence of the principals.

I passed immediately to the oldest of them. His countenance became more repulsive as I approached him; it was deeply pitted with the small-pox, and there was upon it the most Satanic, cold-blooded leer I ever witnessed on a human face. He had given the challenge. *I besought him*, by every consideration of hu-

manity and morality, to recall it. I referred to the youth and inexperience of his antagonist, the conciliatory disposition of the seconds, the fearful consequences to his soul if he should fall, the withering remorse which must ever follow him if he should succeed.

He evidently thirsted for the blood of his opponent ; but observing that his friend and the surgeon seconded my reasoning, he replied, with undissembled reluctance, that he gave the challenge for sufficient reasons ; if they were removed, he might recall it, but never otherwise.

I passed to the other. I admonished him of the sin he was about to perpetrate, and referred to his probable domestic relations. The allusion touched his heart ; he suddenly wiped a tear from his eye. " Yes, sir," said he, " there are hearts which would break if they knew I were here." I referred to my conversation with the seconds and the other principal, and remarked that nothing was now necessary to effect a reconciliation but his retraction of the language which had offended his adversary. " Sir," he replied, planting his foot firmly on the earth, and assuming a look which would have been sublime in a better cause—" Sir, I have but declared the truth respecting that man,

and though I sink into the grave, I will not sanction his villainous character by a retraction." I reasoned with increased vehemence, but no appeal to his judgment or his heart could shake his desperate firmness. My heart bled over this young man, and I left him with tears, which I have no doubt he would have shared under other circumstances. What could I do further? I appealed again to the first principal, but he spurned me with a cool smile; I flew to the seconds, and requested them on any terms to adjust the matter and save the shedding of blood. But they had already measured the ground, and were ready to arrange the principals. "Gentlemen," said I, "the blood of this dreadful deed be upon your souls; I have acquitted myself of it;" and I proceeded from the arena toward my horse.

What were my emotions as I turned away in despair! What! thought I; must it proceed? Is there no expedient to prevent it? In a few minutes one or both of these men may be in eternity, accursed for ever with "blood-guiltiness!" Can I not pluck them as brands from the burning? My spirit was in a tumult of anxiety. In a moment, as the principals were taking their places, I was again on the ground, *standing* on the line between them. "Sirs!"

I exclaimed, "in the name of God, I adjure you stop this murderous work. It must not, it cannot proceed."

"Knock him down," cried the elder duellist, with a fearful imprecation.

"Sir," said the younger, "I appreciate your motives, but demand of you to interfere no more with these arrangements."

The seconds seized me by the arm, and compelled me to retire. But I warned them at every step. Never before did I feel so deeply the value and hazard of the human soul. My remarks were without effect, except on one of the friends of the younger principal. "This is a horrible place," said he; "I cannot endure it;" and he turned away with me from the scene.

"Now, then, for it," said one of the seconds, as they returned; "take your places." Shudderingly I hastened my pace to escape the result.

"One, two"—the next sound was lost in the explosion of the pistols. "O God!" shrieked a voice of agony. I turned round; the younger principal, with his hand to his face, shrieked again, quivered, and fell to the earth. I rushed to him. With one hand he clung to the earth, the fingers penetrating the sod, with the other he grasped his left jaw, which was shattered with a horrid wound. I turned with faintness

from the sight. The charge had passed through the left side of the mouth, crashing the teeth, severing the jugular, and passing out at the back of the head, laying open entirely one side of the face and neck. In this ghastly wound, amid blood and shattered teeth, had he fixed his grasp with a tenacity which could not be moved. Bleeding profusely, and convulsive with agony, he lay for several minutes, the most frightful spectacle I had ever witnessed. The countenances of the spectators expressed a conscious relief when it was announced by the surgeon that death had ended his agony. Meanwhile the murderer, with his party, had left the ground.

One of the company was despatched, on my horse, to communicate the dreadful news to the family of the victim. The dead young man was cleansed from his blood, and borne immediately to the carriage. I accompanied it into N——. It stopped before a small, but elegant house. The driver ran to the door and rapped. An elderly lady opened it with frantic agitation, at the instant when we were lifting the ghastly remains from the carriage. She gazed, as if thunderstruck, for a moment, and fell fainting in the doorway. A servant removed her into *the parlour*, and as we passed with the corpse

into a rear room, I observed her extended on a sofa as pale as her hapless son. We had just laid the body on a table—the stiffened hand still grasping the wound—when a young lady, tastefully attired in white, and with a face delicately beautiful, rushed into the room and threw her arms around it, weeping with uncontrollable emotion, and exclaiming with agony of feeling, “My brother!—my dear, dear brother!—Can it be—O, can it be?” The attendants tore her away. I shall never forget the look of utter wretchedness she wore as they led her past me, her eyes suffused with tears, and her bosom stained with her brother’s blood.

This unfortunate young man was of New-England origin. He had settled in the town of N——, where his business prospered so well that he had invited his mother and sister to reside with him. His home, endeared by gentleness and love, and every temporal comfort, was a scene of unalloyed happiness, but in an evil hour he yielded to a local and absurd prejudice, a sentiment of honour, falsely so called, which his education should have taught him to despise. He was less excusable than his malicious murderer, for he had more light and better sentiments. This one step ruined him and his *happy family*. He was interred the next day,

with the regrets of the whole community. His poor mother never left the house till she was carried to her grave, by his side. She died after a delirious fever of two weeks' duration, throughout which she ceased not to implore the attendants, with tears, to rescue her hapless son from the hands of assassins, who she imagined kept him concealed for their murderous purpose. His sister still lives, but poor and broken-hearted. Her beauty and her energies have been wasted by sorrow, and she is dependant on others for her daily bread.

I have heard some uncertain reports of his antagonist; the most probable of which is, that he died three years after of the yellow fever at New-Orleans, raging with the horrors of remorse. Such was the local estimation of this bloody deed, that scarcely an effort was made to bring him to justice. Alas, for the influence of fashionable opinion! It can silence, by its dictates, the laws of man and of God, and exalt murder to the glory of chivalry.

## BISHOP ASBURY.

*"A workman that needeth not to be ashamed."*

St. Paul.

To have enjoyed the friendship of the great and good Asbury may well be considered a distinguished honour—his autographs on the ordination certificates of the fathers of the church are precious mementoes, and more satisfactory authentications of their ministry than could be the sign manual of any pope, archbishop, or other supposed successor of the apostles. If there are any episcopal seats in heaven, assuredly there are few prelates since St. Paul who will sit above Francis Asbury.

His marked characteristics are few, but remarkably strong. They are not painted, in our conception of his character, but sculptured. He was altogether a most wonderful man. Born in lowly circumstances, called early to the ministry, and when in it burdened with labours truly amazing, he had but little opportunity for mental cultivation. Yet he acquired (how, is inconceivable) a knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; he could read them, and consulted them in studying the sacred text. *He was also singularly familiar with history,*



especially ecclesiastical history. Church polity, in all its varieties, ancient and modern, he had studied thoroughly, and referred to constantly. In mental and moral science he was more than a mere reader. In natural philosophy he was generally accurate. He was a more extensive reader than is generally supposed. He had no knowledge of mathematics, and his arithmetic was altogether original—logical, not mechanical. He possessed an almost intuitive discernment of human character, and was a remarkable physiognomist. He has frequently surprised a whole conference by stating the character of candidates whom he had never seen before. He had a rare facility in contracting the acquaintance of strangers. He was frequently humorous, happy at repartee, and always ready for any labour, however onerous or sudden. An illustration occurs to my memory. At the time my friend E. H. was stationed in B——, knowing that he would spend a night there on his way to the L—— Conference, he made arrangements for him to preach an anniversary sermon for a charitable society just struggling into life, and advertised the appointment as extensively as possible in the *public prints*. Toward evening the old bishop arrived, wearied with a long and tedious jour-

ney. At an early hour the house was crowded—the services commenced. He arose, and read for his text 2 Corinthians viii, 8, “I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.” The felicity of the text and of the discourse was universally observed.

If the classical motto is true, *Perseverantia vincit omnia*, (Perseverance conquers all things,) he was capable of greatness in any department of human ambition, for his great master trait was a firmness of purpose which no hostility could shake, and no allurements seduce. When once he entered on his immense labours in America, his destiny was fixed. His indomitable energy bore him onward through journeys long and perilous, labours arduous and incessant, privations and vexations which none of his European coadjutors knew, and this, not during a brief interval of youthful zeal, or of circumstances auspicious to an ardent ambition, but through all possible discouragements, and through the infirmities of age, when it was necessary to assist him to and from his carriage, and when he could no longer stand, but sat in the pulpit,—till, in fine, he dropped exhausted into the grave. He was eminently a *man of one work*, and in that work he was im-

pelled by a quenchless zeal, which allowed no leisure for any other consideration. It drew him away from his native land and parental home, and permitted no return. It induced him to forego the felicities of domestic life, and to pass through a long career without a local habitation or a resting place. He was a noble example of an evangelical bishop. He possessed all the personal dignity of the episcopal office, without any of the assumed honours and luxurious exemptions which are usually connected with it. While he directed with inflexible authority the ministerial host of his vast diocese, he transcended the meanest of them in sufferings, labours, and journeyings. Fifty-five years he was a preacher, forty-five of them he spent on our continent. It has been estimated that he sat in two hundred and twenty-four annual conferences, and consecrated about four thousand ministers.

I have said that his labours and sufferings were unequalled by those of his transatlantic coadjutors. He travelled usually about six thousand miles a year, which exceeded the journeyings of Wesley. Wesley's field was much less extended, and much more comfortable in every respect. He was in his own country—had the best facilities for travelling—

and moved through a nation supplied with all the conveniences of life. Asbury was a foreigner, and lived among us at a period of profound antipathy toward his native land; but when most others fled from the field, he remained, even though concealment was necessary. The country was new and vast, yet he travelled over its length and breadth, now through its older settlements, and then along its frontier lines, climbing mountains, fording streams, sleeping under the trees of the forest, or finding shelter for his wearied frame in log cabins.

Whitefield, though he travelled over the same continent, confined himself to its Atlantic cities, where every convenience was lavishly afforded him. Asbury pushed his course to the remotest frontier, travelling frequently with the emigrating caravan for protection from the savage, and thanking God for the coarse fare which was afforded him in the hut of the back-woodsman. Whitefield's theological opinions agreed with the errors of the dominant churches, and conciliated their favour. Asbury's were detested by them as among the worst forms of heresy. Methodism had commenced before his arrival on our continent, and no doubt would *have prospered* more or less, but to his energy

must be ascribed its wonderful progress. Spread by his exertions, no barrier could stand before it; it broke out on the right and on the left; his incessant preaching and ceaseless traveling, now in the north and then in the south, now in the east and then in the west, gave it almost an omnipresent and simultaneous action through all the states. Though at the commencement of his labours in this country there were *but six hundred* members in the church, when he fell it was victoriously at the head of *an army of two hundred and twelve thousand*, who were still exulting in their strength, and pressing on to the spiritual conquest of the land, like the hosts of war to the charge!

Wonderful man! many of similar, but none of equal powers, have followed in his footsteps. With a ministry of such spirits, the regeneration of our race would be the achievement of a single age. Such a ministry, warring with the mighty agencies of evil in our world, would present the sublime spectacle of Milton's battle of the angels. And such a ministry (soul-stirring thought!) is practicable. It was not the possession of those powers which form the prerogatives of genius that made Asbury what *he was*. He displayed no splendid endow-

ments of intellect. His greatness arose more from *dispositions* than from *talents*. Zeal, love of man, and love of God, armed him with his power, and these are attainable by all. They gave him that determination of purpose which bore down all that opposed it, and made him "mighty through God," equalling in labours and success Whitefield, or even Wesley, without the genius of the one, or the learning of the other. While most of the great men who guided the early movements of Methodism are illustrations of the power of sanctified intellect, Asbury seems to have been providentially raised up and placed among them as an example of the power of the ordinary faculties of man when sustained by high moral motives, a sublime model, not for the talented, like the former, *but for all*. It has been justly remarked that he occupies the place in the religious history of this country which Washington does in its civil history. Methodism, toward which, on this continent, he sustained the relation of leader, has already outstripped all other sects, but is still in its childhood: all its operations are yet in their incipience. What will be its importance when it reaches maturity? Then, perhaps, the honour we claim for Asbury will be conceded. Methodism, under Asbury, gave the impulse which

roused most other sects, and spread over the country the spirit of revivals. The time will yet come when he will be acknowledged, not merely the father of American Methodism, but of *American evangelism*.

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### PRESENTIMENTS.

*"Secret things belong unto the Lord our God."*

Moses.

I HAVE lately received the Life of Mr. Watson. The biographer, in relating his visit with Watson to a certain village, says, "In passing the church-yard, Mr. Watson pointed to a conspicuous grave, and said, 'The first time I travelled this way, that grave-stone caught my eye, especially the words \* \* \*, who died, aged forty-two. A very strong impression, for which I could not account, was immediately made upon my mind, that I should die at precisely the same age. The impression was both strong and sudden; I have already passed that age, and this shows how little stress can be justly laid upon those sudden impulses and impressions, of which some people make so much account.' This impression, it appears, had created considerable uneasiness in the family

of Mr. Watson ; but its effect on his own mind it is not easy to determine."

Watson possessed a vigorous mind, one that we should suppose would be the last to indulge fanatical or whimsical ideas; we may learn, therefore, from his case, the liability of weaker minds to be deluded by such impressions. Had he been as susceptible as his anxious family, it is not improbable that he would have worn away under the impression, fallen into some fatal disease, and expired at the precise time, and all this the result merely of imagination. Medical history is full of proofs on this subject, and it is altogether probable that most who die under such circumstances fall victims to their own folly, instead of a revealed design of Providence. Cases have been known where criminals condemned to death have been blindfolded, laid upon the block, slightly struck on the neck with a cane, and taken up dead, without the loss of a drop of blood.

It is singular with what tenacity these morbid fears will cling to the mind, especially when the system has been enervated by prolonged excitement. No class of men, perhaps, are more exposed to such excitement than Methodist preachers, by both their extemporaneous *mode of speaking*, which is accompanied often



with intense emotion, and the frequency and arduousness of their pastoral labours and social meetings; and perhaps most of them experience, at some time or other, its depressing effects.

My old friend M., when stationed at B——, had a brief and ludicrous attack of this species of hypochondria. He had laboured arduously during several weeks, and not a few vexatious difficulties had disturbed the church and harassed his mind. On returning late, and quite exhausted, one night, from a meeting at which he had felt uncommonly languid and dejected, he was suddenly seized, as he entered his study, with the impression that he had offended God, and would die that very night. As usual with a diseased state of the mind, the thought was attended with profound melancholy. Of course he thought not of sleep, but walked the floor in agony for hours. Wearied at last by his rapid paces, he seated himself, and, covering his face with his hands, reclined his head on a table. Thus situated, he prayed, wept, and trembled, and as the time advanced, prayed, wept, and trembled the more. At last, in his agony, and with his hair on end, he rose to pace again the floor, when, lo! daylight was streaming in at his window! The illusion was gone, and the

astonished man knew not whether he ought to smile or blush at his weakness. It was a weakness, however, which a superior mind can more easily despise than prevent.

It was my own misfortune once to suffer much from one of these presentiments of death. It was received while I was upon my knees in private prayer. The circumstances were strong, the impression at the time was singularly clear and forcible, like an intuition. Subsequent circumstances, too, seemed confirmatory of it. The very next day an excellent Christian died in the neighbourhood, who had entertained such a presentiment for months, and had even provided his coffin for the event. As the time passed the omens became stronger; by an accidental exposure I took cold, was attacked with cough, and confined to my room with incipient symptoms of pulmonary consumption. How easily would some minds have given way under these circumstances, and have realized the expected result! I had not, however, been disposed to superstitious fears, and knew the caprices of the imagination, and its dangerous influence on health. I therefore calmly endeavoured to prepare my mind and circumstances for any result, and waited through the period of *several weeks*, within which I expected to die,

and which terminated precisely with the year. During this time I was confined to my room; the impression was inseparably present; I treated it with respect, but not with fear—it might be from God, or it might not. The last night came, but still there were a few hours, and what might not occur in them! I watched until midnight, and not until the clock announced that the last moment of the year had flown was I clear from this remarkable illusion. I then fell upon my knees, thanked God that I had not fallen a victim to this weakness, and prayed that I might better remember that “the secret things belong to the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of his law.” It cannot be said that God does not, in rare instances, reveal their dying hours to his people; but I never knew a case which could be relied on, and the best reasons apply against such a course on the part of his providence.

## ANECDOTES OF JESSE LEE.

*"A soft answer turneth away wrath."*—Solomon.

JESSE LEE was a genuine specimen of the first school of Methodist preachers. Like Asbury, he remained unmarried, that he might give himself wholly to the ministry of the word. Asbury prized him highly, and without doubt wished his appointment as his own coadjutor or successor, showing his confidence in his abilities for the office, by using him as his substitute in attending annual conferences and appointing the preachers. In labours he was abundant, and many of the churches, from Maine to Georgia, still preserve recollections of him. His eloquence was sometimes remarkable, smiting the conscience with remorse, or melting the heart with uncontrollable emotion. His person was large, and his countenance at once expressive of two traits, which, though somewhat opposite, were nevertheless united and predominant in his nature—tenderness and shrewdness. Though he could weep with those who wept, few men have been happier at repartee. Satire is a dangerous weapon, and perhaps *it was his fault*, but he often used it with the


best effect. Many a conceited gainsayer, in attempting, after his sermons in the open air, to embarrass him on metaphysical points, has cowered beneath his replies, and retreated in mortification and wonder. My lamented old friend, Dr. Thomas Sargent, (himself one of the pioneers,) has assured me that the current anecdote of the Methodist preacher's reply to two lawyers on extemporary preaching actually occurred with Jesse Lee. The shrewd itinerant had been preaching in a town during the session of the court, and had dealt rather faithfully with the lawyers, two of whom were disposed to make themselves merry at his expense. The day on which the court adjourned he left the place for another appointment. While riding on his way, he perceived the two lawyers hastening after him on horseback, with evident expectations of amusement. They entered into conversation with him on extemporaneous speaking. "Don't you often make mistakes?" said one of them. "Yes, sir." "Well, what do you do with them?—Let them go?" "Sometimes I do," replied the preacher, drily; "if they are very important, I correct them; if not, or if they express the truth, though differently from what I designed, why, I often let them go. For instance, if, in preaching, I should wish to

quote the text which says, 'the devil is a liar, and the father of it,' and should happen to misquote it, and say he was a '*lawyer*,' &c., why, it is so near the truth, I should probably let it pass." The gentlemen of the bar looked at each other, and were soon in advance, hastening on their way.

Many anecdotes are still related among the old Methodists who knew him, which illustrate his Christian meekness. The following is one. I am indebted for it to his nephew, Rev. L. M. Lee, who says the anecdote may be relied on as having really transpired. It was communicated to a member of the family under the following circumstances, by the individual most involved in the affair:—Some few years since a nephew of Mr. Lee, engaged in some business transaction in a store in Petersburg, Virginia, and being addressed as Mr. Lee, attracted the attention of an aged gentleman, General P., at the same time in the store, who immediately accosted him, and asked if he was a kinsman of the Rev. Jesse Lee. On being informed that he was a nephew, the general said he had long desired to see some member of the old minister's family, in order to communicate a circumstance that once occurred between himself and Mr. Lee. On being told that it would afford

him pleasure to hear anything concerning his venerable relative, the general proceeded to relate in substance the following narrative :—

“ When I was a young man, I went to hear Mr. Lee preach at —— meeting-house. There was a very large crowd in attendance, and a great many could not get into the house. Among others I got near the door, and being fond of show and frolic, I indulged in some indiscretion, for which Mr. Lee mildly, but plainly reproved me. In an instant all the bad feelings of my heart were roused. I was deeply insulted, and felt that my whole family was disgraced. I retired from the crowd to brood over the insult, and meditate revenge. It was not long before I resolved to whip him before he left the ground. I kept the resolution to myself; and watched, with the eager intensity of resentment, the opportunity to put it in execution. But the congregation was dismissed and dispersed, and I saw nothing of the preacher. How he escaped me I could never learn. I looked on every hand, scrutinized every departing group, but saw nothing of the man I felt I hated, and was resolved to whip. I went home sullen, mortified, and filled with revenge. My victim had escaped me. But I ‘nursed my wrath to keep it warm;’ and cherished the determination to



put it into execution the first time I saw Mr. Lee, although long years should intervene. Gradually, however, my feelings subsided, and my impressions of the insult became weaker and less vivid; and in the lapse of a few years the whole affair faded away from my mind. Thirteen years passed over me, and the impetuosity of youth had been softened down by sober manhood, and gradually-approaching age. I was standing upon 'the downhill of life.' On a beautiful morning in the early spring, I left my residence to transact some business in Petersburg; and on reaching the main road leading to town, I saw, a few hundred yards before me, an elderly-looking man jogging slowly along in a single gig. As soon as I saw him, it struck me, that's Jesse Lee. The name, the man, the sight of him recalled all my recollections of the insult, and all my purposes of resentment. I strove to banish them all from my mind. I reasoned on the long years that had intervened since the occurrence; the impropriety of thinking of revenge, and the folly of executing a purpose formed in anger, and after so long a lapse of time. But the more I thought, the warmer I became. My resolution stared me in the face; and something whispered coward in my heart if I failed to fulfil it. My mind was



in a perfect tumult, and my passions waxed strong. I determined to execute my resolution to the utmost; and full of rage I spurred my horse, and was soon at the side of the man that I felt of all others I hated most.

"I accosted him rather rudely with the question, 'Are you not a Methodist preacher?'"

"'I pass for one,' was the reply, and in a manner that struck me as very meek.

"'An't your name Jesse Lee?'"

"'Yes: that's my name.'"

"'Do you recollect preaching in the year — at — meeting-house?'"

"'Yes; very well.'"

"'Well, do you recollect reproving a young man on that occasion for some misbehaviour?'"

"After a short pause for recollection, he replied, 'I do.'"

"'Well,' said I, 'I am that young man; and I determined that I would whip you for it the first time I saw you. I have never seen you from that day until this; and now I intend to execute my resolution and whip you.'"

"As soon as I finished speaking, the old man stopped his horse, and looking me full in the face, said, 'You are a younger man than I am. You are strong and active; and I am old and feeble. I have no doubt but, if I were disposed

to fight, you could whip me very easily; and it would be useless for me to resist. But as a "man of God I must not strive." So as you are determined to whip me, if you will just wait, I will get out of my gig, and get down on my knees, and you may whip me as long as you please.'

"Never," said the old general, "was I so suddenly and powerfully affected. I was completely overcome. I trembled from head to foot. I would have given my estate if I had never mentioned the subject. A strange weakness came over my frame. I felt sick at heart; ashamed, mortified, and degraded, I struck my spurs into my horse, and dashed along the road with the speed of a madman. What became of the good old man I know not. I never saw him after that painfully-remembered morning. He has long since passed away from the earth; and has reaped the reward of the good, the gentle, and the useful, in a world where 'the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary find eternal rest.'

"I am now old; few and full of evil have been the days of the years of my life, yet I am not now without hope in God. I have made my peace with him who is 'the Judge of the quick and dead;' and hope ere long to see that

good man of God with feelings very different from those with which I met him last."

The old man ceased. A glow of satisfaction spread over his features, and a tear stood in his eye. He seemed as if a burden was removed from his heart—that he had disencumbered himself of a load that had long pressed upon his spirits. He had given his secret to the near relative of the man he had once intended to injure, but whose memory he now cherished with feelings akin to those that unite the redeemed to each other, and bind the whole to "the Father of the spirits of all flesh."

## THE MORAL SUBLIME.

*"The sublime is an outward reflection of the inward greatness of the soul."*—Longinus.

THE moral sublime is the sublime in moral action or endurance—the highest appeal to human taste. In an extensive review of ecclesiastical history which I have lately completed, I have been struck with the numerous examples which it affords of this noble greatness.

Profane history affords many sublime examples of endurance and self-sacrifice. The cases of Socrates, Leonidas, Regulus, and Winkelried, sustain our confidence in humanity and our hopes of the world. But how far short of the illustrious examples of the church are these instances! There is a peculiarity in the latter, arising from religious influence, which approaches the sublimity of inspiration. How calmly and majestically they suffer! What a bearing of repose, like the classic statues of the gods, they wear at the very stake, as if they were beings of a superior essence, immortal, and insensible to the effects of the elements! The instances of profane history are cases of cool and stanch submission to stern principle or hard necessity—magnanimous, indeed, but it

is a dread magnanimity—a submission to suffering that is felt and endured, but not defied and vanquished. Those of religion are examples of calm triumph—of majestic superiority to suffering, as if they were conscious of being “more than conquerors.” The former had fortitude, but the latter courage.

What an impressive specimen of the moral sublime is the last prayer of the gray-headed Polycarp, at the stake! He was nearly ninety years old; the veneration and affections of all the Asiatic churches centered in him. After being exposed to the hootings of the populace, and the aggravations of a mock trial, he was led to the place of death, where, being bound and all things ready for the match, he uttered this memorable prayer, or rather thanksgiving:—  
“Father of thy well-beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the knowledge of thee—God of angels and powers, and all creation, and of all the family of the righteous that live before thee—I bless thee that thou hast counted me worthy of this day, and of this hour,—an hour in which I am to have a share in the number of the martyrs and in the cup of Christ, unto the resurrection of eternal life, both of the soul and the body, *in the incorruptible felicity of the Holy Spirit.*”

Among whom may I be received this day, as a rich and acceptable sacrifice, which thou, the faithful and true God, hast prepared. Wherefore on this account and for all things I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee, through the eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ, thy well-beloved Son. Through whom all glory be to thee with him in the Holy Ghost, both now and for ever. Amen." The flames curled over him, and he was no more.

I scarcely know of a more sublime picture, though not an instance of violent suffering, than that of the death of the VENERABLE BEDE, as described by one of his pupils. He was the ornament of his country and of the eighth century, and was employed at the time of his death in rendering the Gospel of St. John into the language of the people, the Anglo-Saxon. "Many nights," says his disciple, "he passed without sleep, yet rejoicing and giving thanks, unless when a little slumber intervened. When he awoke he resumed his accustomed devotions, and with expanded hands never ceased giving thanks to God. By turns we read, and by turns we wept; indeed, we always read in tears. In such solemn joy we passed fifty days; but during these days, besides the lectures he gave, he endeavoured to compose two

works ; one of which was a translation of St. John into English. It has been observed of him, that he never knew what it was to do nothing. And after his breathing became still shorter, he dictated cheerfully, and sometimes said, '*Make haste* ; I know not how long I shall hold out ; my Maker may take me away very soon.' On one occasion, a pupil said to him, 'Most dear master, there is yet one chapter wanting ; do you think it troublesome to be asked any more questions ?' He answered, 'It is no trouble ; take your pen and write *fast*.' He continued to converse cheerfully, and while his friends wept as he told them they would see him no more, they rejoiced to hear him say, 'It is now time for me to return to Him who made me. The time of my dissolution draws near. I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ. Yes, my soul desires to see Christ in his beauty.' The pupil before mentioned said to him, 'Dear master, *one* sentence is still wanting.' He replied, '*Write quickly*.' The young man soon added, 'It is finished.' He answered, 'Thou hast well said, all is now finished ! Hold my head with thy hands. I shall delight to sit on the opposite side of the *room*, on the holy spot at which I have been accustomed to pray, and where, while sitting,

I can invoke my Father.' Being placed on the floor of his little room, he sung, 'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,' and died as he uttered the last word." What a scene for the painter! And one has painted it; not in colours, but in equally-expressive words :—

— Within his studious cell,  
The man of mighty mind,  
His cowed and venerable brow  
With sickness pale, reclined.

"Speed on!" Then flew the writer's pen,  
With grief and fear perplex'd;  
For death's sure footstep nearer drew  
With each receding text.  
The prompting breath more faintly came—  
"Speed on!—his form I see—  
That awful messenger of God,  
Who may not stay for me."

"*Master, 'tis done.*" "Thou speakest well,  
Life with thy lines kept pace."—  
They bear him to the place of prayer,  
The death dew on his face;  
And there, while o'er the gasping breast  
The last keen torture stole,  
With the high watchword of the skies,  
Went forth that sainted soul.



## THE CONVERTED DUTCHMAN.

*"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners."*—Paul.

AMONG my old ministerial acquaintances is the quaint B. H., now, like myself, on the "sick list" of the itinerant host. He was a pioneer evangelist among the Dutch settlers of New-York, and many are the humorous anecdotes which he gathered among those untutored, but honest-hearted rustics. He had a strong susceptibility of the humorous, and would often relate his comico-serious reminiscences with such effect as to excite one part of the company to tears and another to laughter, according to the serious or mirthful propensity of the hearer. One of these anecdotes I shall never forget. It was his favourite, and by repeated requests he was induced to put it on paper. I give it in his own words, for the words are essential to the sketch. It is the experience of a converted Dutchman, as stated by himself in a class meeting, and has always struck me as a correct representation of the workings of the human heart, and of the triumphs of grace over the stunted *views of avarice*. He said,—

*"Mine dear bredren, I want to tell you some*

mine experience. When de Metodists first came into dese parts, I tot I was doing bery well; for mine wife and I had two sons, Ned and Jim; and we had a good farm dat Neddy and I could work bery well, so I let Jim go out to work about fourteen miles off from home. But de Metodists come into our parts, and Neddy went to dare meeting, and he got converted, and I tot we should be all undone; so I told Ned he must not go to dese Metodists meetings, for so much praying and so much going to meeting would ruin us all. But Neddy said, 'O fader, I must serve de Lord and save my soul.' But, I said, you must do de work too. So I gave him a hard stint on the day of dere meeting; but he work so hard dat he got his stint done, and went to de meeting after all. While I set on mine stoop and smoked mine pipe, I see him go over de hill to de Methodist meeting, and I said to my wife, Elizabet, we shall be undone, for our Ned will go to dese meetings; and she said, 'What can we do?' Well, I said, den I will stint him harder; and so I did several times when de meeting come. But Neddy worked hard, and sometimes he got some boys to help him, so dat he would go off to de meeting while I set on my stoop and smoked mine pipe. I could see Ned go over

de hill. I said one day, O mine Got, what can I do—dis boy will go to dese meetings, after all I can do? So when Ned come home I said, Ned, you must leave off going to dese meetings, or I will send for Jim to come home, and turn you away. But Neddy said, 'O fader, I must serve de Lord and save my soul.' Well, den, I will send for Jim; so I sent for Jim; and when he come home, den I heard he had been to de Methodist meeting where he had lived, and he was converted too. And Ned and Jim both said, 'O fader, we must serve de Lord and save our souls.' But I said to mine wife, Dese Methodists must be wrong; da will undo us all, for da have got Ned and Jim both; I wish you would go to dare meeting, and you can see what is wrong; but Ned and Jim can't see it. So de next meeting day de old woman went wid Ned and Jim; but I set on mine stoop, and smoked mine pipe. But I said to mine self, I guess dese Methodists have got dar match to git de old woman, and she will see what's wrong. So I smoked mine pipe, and looked to see dem come back. By and by I see dem coming; and when da come near I see de tears run down mine wife's face. Den I said, O mine Got, da *have got* de old woman too. I tot I am *undone*; for da have got Ned, and Jim, and de

old woman. And when da come on de stoop mine wife said, 'O we must not speak against dis people, for da are de people of Got.' But I said noting, for I had not been to any of de meetings, so I was in great trouble. But in a few days after I heard dat dare was a Presbyterian missionary going to preach a little ways off; so I tot I would go, for I tot it would not hurt anybody to go to his meeting; and I went wid Ned, and Jim, and mine wife, and he preached; but dere was noting done till after de meeting was over, and den dere was two young men in de toder room dat sung and prayed so good as anybody; and da prayed for dar old fader too. And many cried, and I tot da prayed bery well. After dis I was going out of de door to go home, and a woman said to me, 'Mr —, you must be a happy man to have two such young men as dem dat prayed.' I said, Was that Ned and Jim? She said, 'Yes.' O, I felt so mad to tink dey had prayed for me, and exposed me before all de people. But I said noting, but went home, and I went right to bed. But now my mind was more troubled dan ever before, for I began to tink how wicked I was to stint poor Neddy so hard, and try to hinder him from saving his soul—but I said noting, and mine wife said noting; so I tried

to go to sleep ; but as soon as I shut mine eyes I could see Neddy going over de hill to go to his meeting, after he had done his hard stint, so tired and weary. Den I felt worse and worse ; and by and by I groaned out, and mine wife ast me ‘ what’s de matter ? ’ I said, I believe I am dying. She said, ‘ Shall I call up Ned and Jim ? ’ I said, Yes. And Jim come to de bed and said, ‘ O, fader, what is de matter ? ’ I said, I believe I am dying. And he said, ‘ Fader, shall I pray for you ? ’ I said, O yes, and Neddy too. And glory be to Got, I believe he heard prayer ; for tough I felt mine sins like a mountain load to sink me down to hell, I cried, O Got, have mercy on me, a poor sinner ; and by and by I feel someting run all over me, and split mine heart all to pieces, and I felt so humble and so loving dat I rejoice and praise Got ; and now I am resolved to serve Got wit Ned, and Jim, and mine wife, and dese Metodists.”

## DR. COKE.

*"A burning and a shining light."*—John.

DR. COKE was the foreign minister of Methodism. He possessed a zealous and vivacious spirit, which nothing could damp, but which caught inspiration from discouragements, and, like the impeded flood, grew stronger by obstructions. He had marked defects, but is one of the most interesting characters in the history of our church—an example of ministerial zeal worthy of universal admiration and imitation. His stature was low, his voice effeminate, but his soul was as vast as ever dwelt in a human bosom. He was the first bishop of the Methodist Church in the United States, but found not in a diocese coextensive with the new world room for his energies. Actuated by an impulse which allowed him no rest, he was perpetually contriving new measures for the extension of the cause which he had embraced. His plans, had he been a man of ordinary abilities, would have entitled him to the character of a visionary fanatic; but he was one of those rare spirits whose schemes are but the outline of their grand conceptions, and whose conceptions are the legitimate products of their exer-

gies. He crossed the Atlantic eighteen times at his own expense. Until his death, he had charge of the Methodist missions throughout the world, a work for which he was undoubtedly raised up and qualified by God. He founded the negro missions of the West Indies, which will no doubt exert an important influence on the destiny of those islands. They included fifteen thousand members at the time of his death. He visited the missions which he had established, spent almost the whole of his patrimonial fortune in their support, preached for them, and begged for them from door to door. The missionary spirit was with him "as a burning fire shut up in his bones." When a veteran of almost seventy years, we find him presenting himself before the Wesleyan Conference as a missionary for the East Indies. The conference objected, on account of the expense, when he himself offered to pay the charges of the outfit, to the amount of six thousand pounds. He prevailed over all objections, and embarked with a small band of labourers; died on the voyage, and was buried in the waves; but the undertaking succeeded, and the Wesleyan East India missions are the result. It has been justly asserted that, next to Mr. Wesley, no man was ever connected with the

Wesleyan body who contributed more to extend the blessings of Christianity among mankind. His colleague in the episcopacy of the American church would not allow of even this exception: "A minister of Christ," said Asbury, when the news of his death arrived, "a minister of Christ, in zeal, in labours, and in services, the greatest man of the last century." He has also recorded the sentiment somewhere in his Journal.

Coke was not merely energetic; he possessed a sagacity which was quick in its perceptions, and a comprehension wide in its range. We owe to his judgment some of the most important features in the economy of American Methodism. He first proposed and obtained a permanent establishment of the General Conference to be held at stated times,—a measure which, in giving unity and energy to our vast body, is perhaps unequalled in importance by any other department of our system. In the very outset, his comprehensive mind saw the importance of that provision, the deficiency of which has been, perhaps, our greatest loss, and the supply of which is now so strenuously attempted by us,—educational institutions. He had no serious hostility to resist in his efforts for such institutions; but such was the ineffi-



ciency, if not indifference, of most others, that the honour of the attempt (and an honour it still is, for it has silenced many a charge against us) belongs almost exclusively to his name. Not discouraged when the first establishment was burned by fire, he pressed with all his energies a second and even more extended attempt, and ceased not his endeavours until he fully succeeded. This institution shared the fate of its predecessor, and (Dr. Coke being mostly absent from the country) Methodism was allowed to grow up without this great auxiliary. What might have been the extent and maturity of Christian education in our land at this moment, had the spirit of Coke been more general among us at that period! The intelligent Methodist cannot review the interval of indifference which followed but with mortification and pain, for the immense influence and usefulness which it has subtracted from the church.

Cokesbury College flourished during its short day with much prosperity. The state legislature voluntarily proffered an act of incorporation, with power to confer degrees. Offers were made from Kentucky and Georgia, of land and funds for the founding of similar institutions; a few influential persons pledged two thousand acres of land, and one church sub-

scribed twelve thousand five hundred pounds of tobacco. But the prospect of success which was dawning, and, no doubt, would have opened over the length and breadth of the nation, was disregarded, through an absurd interpretation of one of those providences which, if we may learn from the past, seem preparatory for the success of great plans,—the difficulty of their first operation. It would have been as wise to have abandoned Methodism, because of its first trials, as it was to abandon education because of the conflagration of Cokesbury College.

Dr. Coke was not only useful in the superintendence of great measures—he was active as a preacher; all the minuter duties of a Methodist itinerant, as far as they came within the wide sweep of his ceaseless movements, he performed, and at the same time made no small use of his pen. Wesley used to say he was as a right hand to him. He was unquestionably the next character to Wesley himself in the biographical catalogue of Methodism. It was a noble sentiment recorded by him, at sea, on his first voyage to America, and which illustrates as fully as language can his own character, “I want the wings of an eagle, and the voice of a trumpet, that I may proclaim the

gospel through the east and the west, the north and the south."

There is genuine sublimity in the end of this veteran evangelist. Such a man belongs to no locality—he belongs to the world; though dead, his influence is widening daily over the earth, and it was fitting that he should be buried in the ocean, whose waves might sound his requiem on the shores of all lands.

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#### PROGRESS IN PIETY.

*"Grew in grace."*—Paul.

Is it not the habit of most Christians, after the first fervours of conversion, to content themselves with a uniform practice of the regular duties of religion, maintaining a fixed temper of mind, and expecting no very appreciable advances in piety, except, it may be, in seasons of extraordinary revivals? At least, it is unquestionable that the proportion is very small in the general church, who, in the strong language of David, "pant" after the Lord. The Christian course is represented as a "race." How absurd would it be for a racer to stop at frequent intervals in his progress, or to start with ardour,

and then, folding his arms deliberately, *walk* to the goal, as if no prize challenged him and no spectators gazed at him? Do most Christians exemplify the strong language of St. Paul, "Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us *run* with patience the race that is set before us?" What a spectacle would the church exhibit if each member maintained the progressive spirit of his religion! Of course the collective mass would be progressive; the term revival would become obsolete, for the perpetual spirit of the church would be lively and active. The cultivation of a strenuous piety would inevitably lead to strong sympathy for the unconverted, and the accession to the numbers of the church would be proportionate to the accession to its piety. *The grand characteristic of the millennial church will be the distinct and practical recognition of this principle.* Its approach will be indicated by the growth, and its consummation accomplished by the entire prevalence, of personal piety.

By what means can we make more progress in personal piety? Is not the first reason of our small progress (first in the order of time as well as in influence) the want of a definite aim toward

it? It is to be feared that most Christians entertain but a feeble conviction of the *duty* of spiritual progress—of “going on,” as St. Paul expresses it. We abandon ourselves to the control of casual circumstances; and are asleep or awake as the influences around us may be dull or quickening. Is not this almost universally the case? Now what would we think of an artisan who should enter his shop and thoughtlessly take up his tools and apply himself indiscriminately to work on whatever materials came first to hand, and pursue this course from day to day until his apartments should be filled with fragments of work, with nothing complete—no definite and final plan? What of an architect who should lay his foundations without reference to the proposed building, or a navigator who should spread his sails alike to all winds, favourable and adverse, contemplating his desired port on his map, but not on his compass? In religion more than anything else we want distinctness, directness. Single out then the particular grace in which you are most deficient, and apply yourself unto it distinctly and daily until you have attained it. You can pray for other blessings, and perform other duties; but let this one be foremost. *Think about it, plan for it, bend everything*

toward it. This advice is applicable not merely to individual graces, but to the great summary blessing of entire sanctification. Whether we attain it gradually or instantaneously, we must address ourselves to its pursuit directly and earnestly, or never obtain it. It is not an accident, that may or may not occur in our experience, but an object to be aimed at and laboured for.

Again, we should make it a rule in our devotions, especially in prayer, *never to fail to receive immediate and sensible communications from God*. The excellent Mr. Benson maintained this resolution to the last; and those who have read his memoirs know the result. This is entirely a voluntary matter with ourselves. God is always willing to bless us. If we apply to him in faith, nothing can hinder.\* The rule we now suggest would preserve the mind in a state suited for the ready exercise of faith. How remarkably remiss are we in our most solemn devotions! Would we approach mere human greatness with the same indifference as we do God? Could we converse with an earthly sovereign with the same heartlessness? Would a man beg for his *life*, as we plead for our *souls*? Christian, rouse thyself! Endeavour to feel more fully the reality of the divine presence, especially in the closet. Carry to the

place of prayer the purpose *not to cease thine importunity till thou art blessed*. The mere purpose will destroy most of those desultory thoughts which intrude into the sacred retirement, and render its devotions vague and ineffectual.

If Christ were visibly present at the hour of prayer, would we apply to him as we now do? Would not our every word be more direct, more confident? And is he less really present, though invisible? Can we not habituate ourselves to a vivid and immediate realization of his presence? Who will doubt it?

A common reason of our slow progress is our casual habit of reading the Scriptures. We frequently say, but how seldom do we *feel*, that the Scriptures are the word of God. What would be the moral effect of a daily interview with an angel? But what archangel could speak to us as God speaks? If the heavens should open above us only once in our lives, and we behold the excellent glory, and converse with God, would not the scene stamp our whole character? Would we be ordinary men afterward? Would not its brightness, as in the case of Moses on descending from the mount, continue to beam around our persons? But God does converse as infallibly *with us in his word*. Alas! we do not intently

apprehend it. The Scriptures, no doubt, have an immense influence even on the collective mind of communities where they are read, but it is amazing that they do not imbue and dilate more fully individual minds. If the perusal of classic writings is so important for the formation of a vigorous and elegant intellect—if the study of the models of art is so effectual in the improvement of genius—what ought to be the effect of a daily converse with the conceptions of the Infinite Mind? Now, if the classic records, or the celebrated specimens of art, were to be glanced at as slightly, though as habitually, as the Scriptures, would they ever impress their excellences on the susceptibilities of genius? They must be examined; a paragraph or a feature must be studied, thoroughly, laboriously. In like manner should the Scriptures be studied. In studying the models of taste, not only must their import be comprehended by the student, but the spirit, the *anima* which actuates the writer or the artist must be caught—this is the highest attainment of genius. There is much reading, but little studying, of the Scriptures. Our Saviour in his command uses the strongest language, “*Search the Scriptures.*”

The point of our remarks is simply that *we should study the word of God daily with express*



*reference to the improvement of our piety.* Such a method, universally used, would develop an efficacy in the truth which would surprise the world. It would not be merely like the efficacy of those occasional circumstances or impulses which we usually depend upon for spiritual improvement, nor merely like that of the hortative addresses of the pulpit. These are all enfeebled by human frailty. It would be potent and sublime from its association with immediate inspiration, and with the purest and grandest truths, such as occupy angel minds. A Christian mind thoroughly conversant with the Scriptures, and accustomed to drink from them as from a fountain of spiritual refreshment, may not manifest such a convulsive zeal, such spasmodic action, as one which depends on impulsive influences; but it will always be more profoundly vigorous, and serenely spiritual, like the deep and steady river in contrast with its tributary stream that leaps and worries down the neighbouring hill-side. Search, then, the Scriptures, with the prayer that God would "sanctify you by his truth," and remember that his "word is truth."

Another reason of the small effect of our efforts to advance in religion is frequently the indulgence of some cherished sin. There is

no state of mind which will allow of spiritual progress but that in which we are "*pressing*" forward. One sin, however apparently insignificant, may interfere with the most powerful influences, as a small object near the eye may exclude the light of the very sun. "*If I regard iniquity in my heart,*" says the Psalmist, "*the Lord will not hear me.*" Do you complain, Christian reader, of the barrenness of your soul, of the feeble influence of all the means of grace upon your heart? Pause a moment, and inquire if there is not some neutralizing element, some favoured, perhaps concealed sin. Rest not till it is expelled. Remember the struggle is for your soul; that one sin may be your ruin—a taint of depravity which may diffuse itself through your whole spirit, and desolate your whole eternity. Lay aside, therefore, every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset you, and run with patience the race set before you.

## BLACK HARRY OF ST. EUSTATIUS.

*"Weeping may endure for a night: but joy cometh in the morning."*—Psalmist.

THE constant travels and vicissitudes of Dr. Coke's life furnished him an exhaustless fund of anecdote, and his social disposition led him to draw on it constantly in company. There is one interesting fact which he often related as an illustration of God's care for both his church and his individual children. Those who heard the doctor preach from the text, "Fear not, little flock," &c., in his flying visits to what were in his day our feeblest societies, may recall the happy illustration, and those who may think it savours too much of fiction will find it authenticated in his private journals and by his biographer.

On the 25th of December, 1786, he was unexpectedly driven by unfavourable winds into the harbour of Antigua, in the West Indies. Actuated by that missionary zeal which allowed him no rest, he immediately began to traverse the islands, preaching wherever he could find opportunity. He arrived at last, with his companion Mr. Hammet, at St. Eustatius, which belonged to the Dutch. As they landed they

were addressed by two coloured men, who inquired, with a cordiality unusual among strangers, "if they belonged to the brethren." The doctor, supposing they referred to the Moravians, said no, but remarked, that they belonged to the same great spiritual family. The hospitable negroes, however, had made no mistake. The doctor was surprised to learn that they had come to welcome him, having received word from the island of St. Christopher's that he designed to visit them. They were two of a number of free negroes who had actually hired a house for his accommodation, which they called his home, and had also provided for the expense of his journey. They conducted him to his new parsonage, where he was entertained with profuse hospitality.

The doctor was taken by surprise. No missionary had been there, and the island was destitute of the means of grace. These generous coloured people were evidently children of God: his visit to them was received as that of an angel, and yet there was mingled with their joy signs of a common sorrow. With the utmost interest he inquired into their history. They informed him, in reply, that some months before, a slave named Harry had been brought to the island from the United States, who was

converted and had joined a Methodist class before his removal. On arriving among them Harry found himself without a religious associate, and with no means of religious improvement but his private devotions. The poor African nevertheless maintained his fidelity to his Lord. After much anxiety and prayer he began publicly to proclaim to his fellow-servants the name of Christ. Such an example was a great novelty in the island, and attracted much attention. His congregations were large; even the governor of the island deigned to hear him, and, by approving his course, indirectly protected him from the opposition to which his servile condition would otherwise have exposed him.

God owned the labours of his humble servant, and at times the Holy Spirit descended in overwhelming influence upon the multitude. Such was the effect on many of the slaves, that they fell like dead men to the earth, and lay for hours insensible. At a meeting not long before the doctor's arrival, sixteen persons were thus struck down under his exhortations. Such an extraordinary circumstance excited a general sensation among the planters. They determined to suppress the meetings. They appealed to the governor, who immediately ordered the slave

before him, and forbade his preaching by severe penalties. So far had the planters succeeded in exciting the morose temper of the governor, that it was only by the intervention of the supreme Judge that Harry was saved from being cruelly flogged. His faithful labours were now peremptorily stopped. It was a remarkable coincidence that Dr. Coke arrived the very day on which Harry was silenced ; hence the mingled joy and sorrow of the "little flock" who so hospitably entertained him.

After giving the doctor this information, they insisted upon his preaching to them immediately, lest by delay the opportunity should be lost ; but fearing, from the silence which had that day been imposed on Harry, that it might result in more evil than good, he declined until he should see the governor. Such, however, was their hunger for the bread of life, that he could not induce them to separate till they had twice sung, and he had thrice joined with them in prayer.

The doctor found, by his interview with the authorities, that it would be imprudent to tarry on the island. He therefore formed the little persecuted band into classes under the most prudent man he could find among them, and, committing them to God, departed amid their

tears and prayers. So amply had they supplied him with fruits and other provisions, that in a voyage of near three weeks, during which eight persons shared these bounties with him, they were not exhausted.

Poor Harry, suspected and watched, did not presume to preach again ; but supposing, after a considerable interval, that the excitement against him had ceased, and that the prohibition only extended to his preaching, he ventured to pray openly with his brethren. He was immediately summoned before the governor, and sentenced to be publicly whipped, then imprisoned, and afterward banished from the island. The sentence was executed with unrelenting cruelty, but the poor negro felt himself honoured in suffering for his Master. While the blood streamed from his back, his Christian fortitude was unshaken. From the whipping-post he was taken to prison, whence he was secretly removed, but whither none of his little company could discover.

In 1789 Dr. Coke returned to the West Indies. After preaching at many other islands, he again visited St. Eustatius to comfort its suffering society. The spirit of persecution still raged there, and the fate of Harry was still wrapped in impenetrable mystery. None of

his associates had been able to obtain the slightest information respecting him since his disappearance. A cruel edict had been passed by the local government, inflicting thirty-nine lashes on any coloured man who should be found praying. It seemed the determination of the authorities to banish religion from the island; yet the seed sown by Harry had sprung up, and nothing could uproot it. During all these trials the little society of St. Eustatius had been growing, its persecuted members had contrived, by some means, to preserve their union, and the doctor found them two hundred and fifty-eight strong, and privately baptized many before his departure. They had been, indeed, "hid with Christ in God." The government again drove him from the island.

After visiting the United States and England, this tireless man of God was, in 1790, again sounding the alarm among the West India Islands, and again he visited St. Eustatius. A new governor had been appointed, and he hoped for a better reception, but he was repelled as obstinately as before. Still the great Shepherd took care of the flock. The rigour of the laws against them had been somewhat relaxed, and, in the providence of God, eight exhorters had arisen among them, who were extensively use-

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ful to the slaves. To these and to the leaders he gave private advice and comfort, and, committing them to God, who had hitherto so marvellously kept them, he again departed. The chief care of the society devolved on a person named Ryley, who, about four years previously, had been converted under the labours of black Harry. Harry's fate was still involved in mysterious secrecy, and his friends indulged the worst fears. But his "works followed him;" he had kindled a fire on St. Eustatius which many waters could not quench. On his return to England Dr. Coke interested the Wesleyan churches in his behalf, and many were the prayers which ascended for him and the afflicted church which he had planted.

In 1792 the doctor again visited the island, but he was not allowed to preach. Nothing was yet known of the fate of poor Harry. The spirit of persecution still prevailed, and even feeble women had been dragged to the whipping-post for having met for prayer. But, in the good providence of God, religion still prospered secretly, and the classes met by stealth. The doctor left them with a determination to go to Holland and solicit the interposition of the parent government. This he *did* with his usual perseverance, but not with

success. The tyranny of the local government continued about twelve years longer; but the great Head of the church at last sent deliverance to his people. In 1804, about eighteen years after Harry was silenced, a missionary was admitted to the island; a chapel was afterward built and Sunday schools established, and St. Eustatius has since continued to be named among the successful missions of the West Indies. Dr. Coke lived to see this long-closed door opened, and the devoted missionary enter with the bread of life for the famishing, but faithful little band of disciples.

Thus does the providence of God protect those who put their trust in him. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." God will, sooner or later, help those who help themselves.

But what became of poor Harry? During about ten years his fate was unknown, and all hope of discerning it before the sea should give up its dead was abandoned. About this time the doctor again visited the States. One evening, after preaching, he was followed to his room by a coloured man, deeply affected. It was poor black Harry! Reader, what would you not have given to have witnessed that interview? He had been sent in a cargo of slaves

to the States, but was now free. Through all these years and changes he had "kept the faith," and was still exercising himself with continued usefulness in the sphere which he occupied.

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### THE WAY OF LIFE.

*"He that believeth shall be saved."*—Christ.

How plain is the way of life ; how explicit is the statement of the plan of salvation : "By grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." The apostle affirms, first, the great proposition of salvation, "*ye are saved ;*" secondly, the primary cause of it, "*grace ;*" and thirdly, the instrumental cause, "*faith :*" and how carefully he guards against Pelagian confidence, "Not of yourselves, it is the gift of God ;" and again he repeats it, "not of works, lest any man should boast." It would seem impossible to mistake the universal import of the New Testament on this its ostensible topic, but how many misapprehend it!—how many grope through long lives down to the grave with the Bible in their hands, ignorant

of its first principle, and never knowing that *peace in believing* which is its balm for the heart's wretchedness! The churches of whole lands have lost sight of the doctrine of justification by faith; lands, too, profoundly skilled in Scriptural exegesis. Alas, for the perversity of man! Though pervaded with depravity, dead in trespasses and sins, miserable and lost, yet would he presume to confront the throne of his Judge with pretences of merit.

Such were my reflections as I descended from the chamber of an individual whose life was flickering with consumption, like the expiring taper in its socket, and whose only solace for the future was the reflection that he had been just to his fellow-men. As his is not an uncommon case, its introduction here may be useful to others.

On taking a seat by his bed, I expressed my sympathy for his sufferings, and my hope that they were working out for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

He hesitated in his answer, and remarked that "death was dreadful to man under any circumstances."

"And yet," said I, "'the sting of death is sin;' and Paul exclaims, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks

be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' The primitive Christians seemed to anticipate it as altogether desirable. The same apostle says expressly, 'I *desire* to depart and be with Christ;' and he represents the Corinthian brethren as 'willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord;' nay, as 'groaning' in 'this tabernacle,' 'earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with their house which is from heaven.'"

"Yes," replied the sick man; "but the church is not now what it then was. Still, God is merciful. I place my trust in him. I have endeavoured to live honestly, and I hope I shall die in peace."

I was startled at his defective views, for he had been the child of religious parents, and had faithfully observed the external duties of religion. I endeavoured to convince him of the depravity of the heart, and its utter unfitness for heaven without faith in Christ and the renewal of the Holy Ghost. My reasonings were evidently heard with reluctance, but I hoped with effect, and, praying for the blessing of the Spirit upon them, I took my leave, designing to call again after allowing him sufficient time for *reflection*.

He was born and educated in Massachusetts. With a strictly Puritan morality, he united the practical tact, general intelligence, and not a little of the metaphysical acuteness of New-England. At my first visit he showed quite a propensity to rebut my appeals by logical difficulties. It was my ardent prayer, as I went to his chamber the next day, that the Lord would enable me to strip from him that guise of self-righteousness which, instead of the wedding garment, is the winding sheet of the soul, one, alas ! in which many a self-deluded sinner has laid down in eternal death. I perceived immediately that my former conversation had produced an effect. He seemed anxious and inquisitive, but still unwilling to abandon his false reliance.

"But do you not think, sir," said he, "that an honest man will be saved?"

"Yes, a truly honest man, honest toward God as well as man, he who honestly conforms to God's terms of salvation ; not one who is honest only according to the moral standard of the world, but he who lives by faith, for 'by grace ye are saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast,' and 'he that believeth not shall be damned.'"

“But can there be much difference between strict morality and piety?”

“The difference is vast. Look at a few particulars. Morality, so called, in its highest form, proposes nothing but *present* and *future* uprightness. True religion proposes this, but also the pardon of the *past*. The strictest moralist will admit that he has sinned in the past, but he makes no provision for past sin. Utter rectitude in the present and the future is no more than his duty; it can involve no supererogative merit which might be transferred to the past. What hope has he, then? The fatal plague spot, however small, is upon him. One sin introduced ‘death and all our wo;’ one sin unforgiven is a spring which, touched by the hand of death, will throw all his eternal destinies into ruin. The Christian has a provision for the past, for he believes in ‘him whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past.’

“Again. Morality is generally limited to relative duties, those which are mutual among men; these form but one class of duties, and though an important, yet a secondary class. Man has a higher relation than that which binds him to his fellows; he is related to God, and

this relation involves duties ; the duties of filial love, of prayer, of praise, and all acts of spiritual devotion. The moralist prides himself on his fidelity to man, while he recklessly refuses the higher claims of God. What though he commits no positive sin against society, yet he is every moment guilty of negative sins against God. And negative sins may be as guilty as positive ones. Positive crimes appear to us more enormous because recognised and punished by human law, but who can say that to refuse to love or worship God is not as great a sin, nay, greater than theft or murder ? I do not say it is, but who can assert it is not ? What, then, is the character of the man who has been all his life incurring such guilt ? How can he enter the presence of his insulted God ?

“ And then look at the sentiments which usually accompany morality. How do they contrast with those of true *religion* ? They are sentiments of pride, of honour, so called. Like the Pharisee in the temple, the moralist flatters himself that he is not like other men. Not so the Christian ; he feels himself to be the chief of sinners ; of himself he is but weakness and guiltiness. And yet, while he knows that of himself he can do nothing, there is within him a sublime consciousness of power, the indwell-



ing Godhead, and he feels that he can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth him.

“Morality is a self-imposed virtue; true religion is the renewal of the heart by the Holy Ghost received by faith. It is ‘the life of God in the soul of man.’ Lean not, then, my dear friend, on this broken reed. You are hastening to your end; look to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world. He is your only hope.”

With tears in his eyes, the sick man replied, “O that I had given my attention to these things earlier! I would do right, I wish to be honest with myself. I have not been satisfied with my condition, and every hour it grows more doubtful. Your arguments appear correct, and yet I am perplexed to know why so much importance is attached to faith—why all the hopes and promises of religion are suspended on it.”

“It should be a sufficient answer,” I replied, “that infinite Wisdom has seen fit so to construct the economy of salvation, and therefore the reasons for the fact, however mysterious to us, must be important. But there are many considerations which give an obvious propriety to this peculiarity of the Christian system.


“A religion which should not provide for the practical improvement of its followers would be

of little advantage to the world ; and yet that should make the hope of salvation dependant upon practical duties would be but a ministry of condemnation, especially to all who, by advanced years, or sickness, or sudden death, are placed beyond the reach of the self-discipline of active virtue ; it would likewise tend to its own destruction, by giving occasion to the self-dependance and self-righteousness of those who receive it. Now the gospel avoids this liability by making salvation dependant entirely on a principle which involves no merit in itself, but tacitly ascribes it all to God, and yet *implies such a frame of mind as necessarily will produce the exercise of every practical virtue.* Faith, by implying the absence of all self-dependance, produces humility ; by reposing all its dependance on God leads to gratitude and love, and gratitude and love lead to adoration ; and, like the filial dependance and love of the child to the parent, they lead also to all obedience and faithfulness. Works have therefore properly been called the evidences of faith. The two most appropriate sentiments to the human mind are kept in lively exercise by faith, namely, the exaltation of God and abasement of self. God's goodness, and our own utter inability, are perpetually suggested by it. Its exercise is direct

communion with God. If we were to be saved by the secondary instrumentality of works, we might forget God in our attention to subordinate means; but faith is an application directly to his throne, and brings us into the light of his excellent glory.

“How admirably is Christianity thus adapted to what must always be the great object of true religion, the improvement, the moral discipline of man, and by a process, too, which to the superficial eye of the skeptic appears calculated to do away the force of moral duties! Indeed, the more the great doctrine of the atonement is scrutinized, the more manifest are its claims to be called the wisdom and the power of God. What form of truth could be better suited than this for all the purposes of a pure and spiritual religion? What one could more exalt God and improve man? What one could more fully dignify the justice of the divine throne, and yet crown with mercy and hope the most dangerous emergency of the penitent sinner? What one could better meet your own case, my dear friend? Is it not what you need? And will you not embrace it? O believe and be saved.”

Seldom have I seen a more affecting expression of self-abandonment, and anxiety, hope, and humility, than was presented by this poor



invalid at the close of the conversation. The Spirit of God was evidently striving with him. With weeping eyes and the tenderness of a child, he exclaimed, "O, sir, this is just what I need. I am standing between both worlds, and in all the universe around me I see but one object upon which I can fix my eyes with confidence, and that is the cross. I tremble even as I look at that symbol of love and mercy. O, can it be that I may yet be saved?"

I conversed with him longer, and commended him to the grace of God in prayer.

For more than a week after this visit I was absent at conference, leaving my charge in the care of a local preacher, who visited him daily. During one of these calls he received peace in believing, and had since been daily sinking under disease, but rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. On my return I immediately visited him. He was not expected to survive the day. His utterance was difficult, but his mind glowed with that brilliancy and vigour which so often accompanies this fatal, but gentle disease. His late, but complete change, was a remarkable instance of the power of grace, and the Lord deigned to him a triumphant exit. It would be interesting to give the details of his final experience; but my design has been to show the

fallacy of his erroneous views, and this outline has already extended too far. Let it suffice to say, that the grace which had thus remarkably rescued him cheered with increasing consolation his remaining hours. I pencilled a few of his dying sentences.

"How astonishing was my delusion! how different my life now looks! guilt—guilt—guilt—all is guilt. I am a brand plucked from the burning. I am saved on the very threshold of hell."

"O that I had more strength to praise Him! My time is so short, and so little of it has been devoted to Him, I want to testify his wonderful mercy every instant."

"I cannot fear; his boundless grace surrounds and sustains me. Well did the Psalmist call it the 'valley of the shadow of death.' It is but a *shadow*, a shade in a refreshing valley."

"I would not exchange this dying bed for the throne of a monarch; all my trust is in God, and I could now trust him, though all fallen spirits should gather about me. I am going, going, going to my Lord and Saviour; though at the eleventh hour, I am saved. I am saved. Let none hereafter despair."

*With similar expressions, he lingered about*

two hours, and then sweetly fell asleep in Jesus. "He that believeth shall be saved." Blessed be God, the truth has never failed.

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### ORIGIN OF THE METHODIST ECONOMY.

*"God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty."*—Paul.

THE origin of Methodism has always appeared to me a remarkable chapter in the history of Providence, and its economy one of the most remarkable passages in that chapter.

Time has proved it to be the most efficient of all modern religious organizations, not only among the dispersed population of a new country, but also in the dense community of an ancient people; on the American frontier, and in the English city, it is found efficacious beyond all other plans, stimulating, impelling all others, and yet outstripping them.

This wonderful system of religious instrumentalities was not conceived *a priori*. It was not the result of sagacious foresight: it grew up spontaneously. Its elementary parts were evolved unexpectedly in the progress of the sect. Wesley saw that the state of religion throughout

the English nation required a thorough reform; and "felt in himself," says Southey, "the power and the will for it, both in such plenitude, that they appeared to him a manifestation not to be doubted of the will of Heaven." He looked not into the future, but consulted only the openings of present duty. "Whither," says the same author, "they were to lead he knew not, nor what form or consistence the societies he was collecting would assume, nor where he was to find labourers as he enlarged the field of his operations, nor how the scheme was to derive its temporal support. But these considerations neither troubled him, nor made him for a moment foreslacken his course. God, he believed, had appointed it, and God would always provide means for his own ends."

He expected at first to keep within the restrictions of the national Church, to which he was devotedly attached. The manner in which he was providentially led to adopt, one by one, the peculiar measures which at last consolidated into a distinct and unparalleled system, is an interesting feature in the history of Methodism. Let us trace it a moment.

The doctrines which he preached, and the *novel emphasis* with which he preached them, *led to his expulsion* from the pulpits of the

Establishment. This, together with the immense assemblies he attracted, compelled him to proclaim them *in the open air*—a measure which the moral wants of the country demanded, and which is justified, as well by the example of Christ as by its incalculable results.

The inconvenience of the “rooms” occupied by his followers for spiritual meetings at Bristol led to the erection of a more commodious edifice. This was a place of occasional preaching, then of regular worship, and finally, without the slightest anticipation of such a result, the first in *a series of chapels* which became the habitual resort of his followers, and thereby contributed, more, perhaps, than any other cause, to their organization into a distinct sect.

The debt incurred by this building rendered necessary *a plan of contribution* among those who assembled in it. They agreed to pay a penny a week. They were divided into companies of twelve, one of whom, called the leader, was appointed to receive their contributions. At their weekly meetings for the payment of this small sum, they found leisure for religious conversation and prayer. These companies, formed thus for a local and temporary object, were afterward called *classes*, and the arrangement was incorporated into the regular economy



of Methodism. In this manner originated one of the most distinctive features of our system—our classes—the advantages of which are beyond all estimation. The class meeting has, more than any other means, preserved our original purity. It is the best school of experimental divinity the world has ever seen. It has given a sociality of spirit and a disciplinary training to Methodism which are equalled in no other sect.

We cannot but admire the providential adaptation of this institution to another which was subsequently to become all-important in our economy—I mean an *itinerant ministry*. Such a ministry could not admit of much pastoral labour, especially in the new world, where the circuits were long. The class leader became a substitute for the preacher in this department of his office. The fruits of an itinerant ministry must have disappeared in many, perhaps most places, during the long intervals which elapsed between the visits of the earlier preachers, had they not been preserved by the class meeting. A small class has been the germ of almost every church we have formed. It was the germ from which has developed the whole growth of our vast cause, for it was *the first organic form of Methodism*.

Another most important result of the class meetings, formed so accidentally, or rather providentially, at Bristol, was the pecuniary provision they led to for the prosecution of the plans which were daily enlarging under the hands of Wesley. The whole *fiscal system* of Methodism arose from the Bristol penny collections. Thus, without foreseeing the great independent cause he was about to establish, Wesley formed, through a slight circumstance, a simple and yet most complete system of finance for the immense expenses which its future prosecution would involve. And how admirably was this pecuniary system adapted to the circumstances of that cause! He was destined to raise up a vast religious combination; it was to include the *poorer* classes, and yet require *large* pecuniary resources. How were these resources to be provided among a poor people? The project presents a complete dilemma. The providential formation of a plan of finance which suited the poverty of the poorest, and which worldly sagacity would have contemned, banished all difficulty, and has led to pecuniary results which have surprised the world.

That other important peculiarity of our church already alluded to, *a lay and itinerant ministry*, was equally providential in its origin. Wesley

was at first opposed to the employment of lay preachers. He expected the co-operation of the regular clergy. They, however, were his most hostile antagonists. Meanwhile, the small societies formed by his followers for spiritual improvement increased. "What," says he, "was to be done in a case of so extreme necessity, where so many souls lay at stake? No clergyman would assist at all. The expedient that remained was to seek some one among themselves who was upright of heart and of sound judgment in the things of God, and to desire him to meet the rest as often as he could, to confirm them, as he was able, in the ways of God, either by reading to them, or by prayer or exhortation." This was the origin of the *Methodist lay ministry*.

The multiplication of societies exceeded the increase of preachers. This rendered it necessary that the latter should itinerate, and thence arose the *Methodist itinerancy*. Our itinerancy is the most admirable feature in our whole ministerial system. It is not a labour-saving provision—it is the contrary of this—but it is truly a labourer-saving one. The pastoral service, which otherwise would have been confined to a single parish, is extended by this plan to scores, and sometimes hundreds, of towns and villages,

and, by the co-operation of the class meeting, is rendered almost as efficient as it would be were it local. It is this peculiarity that has rendered our ministry so successful in our new states. It has also contributed, perhaps, more than any other cause, to maintain a sentiment of unity among us. It gives a pilgrim character to our preachers. They feel that "here they have no abiding city," and are led more earnestly to "seek one" out of sight. It will not allow them to entangle themselves with local trammels. The cross peculiarly "crucifies them to the world, and the world to them." Their zeal, rising into religious chivalry; their devotion to one work; their disregard for ease and the conveniences of stationary life,—are owing, under divine grace, chiefly to their itinerancy. It has made them one of the most self-sacrificing, laborious, practical, and successful bodies of men at present to be found in the great field of Christian labour. The time when itinerancy shall cease in our ministry, and classes among our laity, will be the date of our downfall.

## METHODISM ADAPTED TO OUR COUNTRY.

*"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them: and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose."*—Isaiah.

THERE is another and no less interesting light in which the economy of Methodism strikes me as providential; I mean its *adaptation to our country*. It is a fact worthy of remark, that while the great moral revolution of Methodism was going on across the Atlantic, the greatest political revolution of modern times was in process on our own continent; and when we contemplate the new adaptations of religious action which were evolved by the former, we cannot resist the conviction that there was a providential relation between the two events—that they were not only coincident in time, but also in purpose. While Wesley and his co-labourers were reviving Christianity there, Washington and his compatriots were reviving liberty here. It was the American revolution that led to the development of the resources of this vast country, and rendered it the assembling place of all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people; and Methodism commenced its operations sufficiently early to be in

good vigour by the time that the great movement of the civilized world toward the West began. It seems to have been divinely adapted to this emergency of our country. If we may judge from the result, it was raised up by Providence more in reference to the new than to the old world. Its peculiar measures were strikingly suited to the circumstances of the country, while those of every other contemporary sect were as strikingly unadapted to them. Its zealous spirit readily blended with the buoyant sympathies of a youthful nation flushed with the sense of liberty. The usual process of a long preparatory training for the ministry could not consist with the rapidly-increasing wants of the country. Methodism called into existence a ministry less trained, but not less efficient; possessing in a surprising degree that sterling good sense and manly energy, examples of which great exigences always produce among the people. These it imbued with its own quenchless spirit, and formed them to a standard of character altogether unique in the annals of mankind; they composed a class which, perhaps, will never be seen again. They were distinguished for native mental vigour, shrewdness, extraordinary knowledge of human nature, many of them for overwhelm-

ing natural eloquence, the effects of which on popular assemblies are scarcely paralleled in the history of ancient or modern oratory; and not a few for powers of satire and wit, which made the gainsayer cower before them. To these intellectual attributes they added extraordinary excellences of the heart, a zeal which only burned more fervently where that of most men would have grown faint, a courage that exulted in perils, a deep tenderness for the poor and suffering, a generosity which knew no bounds, and which left most of them in want in their latter days, a forbearance and co-operation with each other which are seldom found in large bodies, an utter devotion to one work, and, withal, a simplicity of character which extended to their manners and their apparel. They were likewise characterized by wonderful physical abilities. They were mostly robust. The feats of labour and endurance which they performed in incessantly preaching in the village and in the "city full," in the slave hut and the Indian wigwam; in journeyings, interrupted by no stress of weather; in fording creeks, swimming rivers, sleeping in forests;—these, with the novel circumstances with which such a career must frequently bring them into collision, would afford examples of life and character

which, in the hands of genius, might be the materials for a new department of romantic literature. They were men who laboured as if the judgment fires had already broken out on the world, and time was to end with their day. These were precisely the men which the moral wants of the new world, at the time we are contemplating, demanded.

The usual plan of local labour, limited to a single congregation or to a parish, was inadequate to the wants of Great Britain at this time ; but much more so to those of the new continent. That extraordinary conception of Wesley, an itinerant ministry, met in the only manner possible the circumstances of the latter ; and the men whom we have described were the only characters who could have carried out this gigantic conception. No one can estimate what would have been the probable result of that rapid advance which the population of the United States was making beyond the customary provisions for religious instruction, had not this novel plan met the emergency. Much of what was then our frontier, but since has become the most important states of the Union, would have passed through the forming period of its character without the influence of Christian institutions. But the Methodist itinerancy has borne



the cross, not only in the midst, but in the van, of the hosts of emigration. That *beau idéal* of hardship, disinterestedness, and romantic adventure, the Methodist itinerant, is found with his horse and saddle-bags threading the trail of the savage, and cheering and blessing with his visits the loneliest cottage on the furthest frontier. They have gone, as pioneers to the aboriginal tribes, and have gathered into the pale of the church more of the children of the forest than any other sect; they have scaled the Rocky Mountains, and are building up Christianity and civilization on the shores of the Columbia; they are hastening down toward the capital of Montezuma, while, throughout the length and breadth of our older states, they have been spreading a healthful influence which has affected all classes, so that their cause includes not only a larger aggregate population than any other sect, but especially a larger proportion of those classes whose moral elevation is the most difficult and the most important,—the savage, the slave, the free negro, and the lower classes generally.

The complex and yet harmonious constitution of the Methodist Church in the United States would be an interesting subject of discussion. It is a vast system of wheels within

wheels, but all revolving with the ease of a well-made machine. Our general conferences occurring once in four years, the annual conferences once a year, the quarterly conferences once in three months, the leaders' meetings once a month, the classes once a week, form an admirable series of gradations extending from a week to four years, and covering all the successive intervals. To these correspond also our gradations of labour,—bishops traversing the continent, presiding elders travelling over extended districts, circuit preachers occupying less extensive fields, assisted by local preachers and exhorters ; and finally, leaders inspecting, weekly, divisions of the local societies. This exact machinery is the secret of the energy and permanence of so diffuse and varied a system. And was it not providential that such a system was raised up at such a time ?

## THE HOSPITABLE WIDOW AND THE TRACT.

*"Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days."*—Solomon.

THE day of judgment alone can reveal the amount of good accomplished by the humble instrumentality of tracts. God's word is the "tree of life," but tracts are its leaves—the leaves which are for the "healing of the nations." Cheap, brief, and pithy statements of religious truth—cheap, that they may be multiplied and scattered broadcast; brief, that they may be read in the moments of leisure which the labouring man can snatch from his toil; and pithy, that they may be read with interest and profit—such publications ought to fall, like pure snow flakes, on all lands. Like the fall of the blossom leaves, they would be followed by fruit in due season. If we cannot give whole loaves, let us multiply by breaking them, and scatter the fragments, at least.

I could fill this volume with illustrations of their utility. I will give, however, but one fact, another example of the usefulness of Dr. Coke.\*

\* *This anecdote is authenticated in one of the reports of the English Religious Tract Society.*

This indefatigable servant of Christ was travelling once in what was then a wilderness part of our country. At that time there were few bridges, but to swim streams was a small feat with the hardy pioneers of Methodism and their well-trained steeds. It was an exploit, however, to which the good doctor and his horse were not accustomed. A river lay in his course, and he endeavoured, by an indirect route, to cross it at the ford, but missed the place. Impatient to proceed, and ambitious to equal the achievements of his American brethren, he patted the neck of his horse, and plunged into the flood. The water was deep, and the horse becoming alarmed, began to struggle and sink, to the imminent peril of his rider. The doctor, extricating his feet from the stirrups, seized on an overhanging bough, and, after being thoroughly drenched, reached the shore, to which the affrighted animal had also returned.

He remained in the forest till he had dried his clothes in the sun, and then mounted to return. On the road he met a man who directed him to the nearest village, and gave him the address of a kind family, where he might expect to be hospitably entertained as an ambassador of God. The doctor, as usual, gave him a hearty word of exhortation and rode on,

wearied with the fatigues of the day, but happy in the expectation of a cordial reception and comfortable rest in the neighbouring hamlet.

Early in the evening he arrived at the village, and was received with all kindness by the good lady of the house to which he had been directed. The table was spread with a bountiful meal, and after his usual domestic service, which consisted in an appropriate exhortation, besides the Scripture lesson and prayer, he retired to rest, thankful to God for so comfortable a conclusion to the trials of the day. The next morning he took an early leave of the family, addressing to each some spiritual counsel, and leaving behind him a single tract, for at that day these convenient little vehicles of truth were rare and precious, and the few who distributed them were obliged to make the most of them.

The doctor returned to England, visited Ireland and the West Indies, traversing, as usual, land and sea in the cause of his Master. After five years had passed away, he was again on the American continent. On his way to one of the conferences, he overtook a number of the preachers who were journeying thither. They all hailed their old friend and bishop with hearty congratulations; but one young man,

who accompanied them, was deeply affected at the unexpected meeting, and was observed to wipe the tears from his eyes. When they had rode several miles, the young man contrived to get by the side of the doctor, and on inquiring if he recollected being in a certain part of America about five years ago, he answered in the affirmative.

“And do you recollect, sir, being nearly drowned in trying to cross a river?”

“I remember it quite well.”

“And do you remember spending the night at the cottage of a widow lady in such a village?”

“Indeed I do,” said the doctor, “and I shall not soon forget the kindness shown me by that excellent family.”

“And do you remember that you presented a tract to the lady when you departed the next morning?”

“I do not recall that,” replied the doctor, “but as I do so often, it is quite possible I did so then.”

“Well, sir, you did leave there a tract, which that lady still keeps, and if you ever pass through the village again you can see it; but no money can purchase it from her. She read it, and the Lord made it the instrument of her conversion; a number of her children and her

neighbours have also been converted through its instrumentality, and there is now in the village a prosperous society."

"God be praised," exclaimed the doctor, and the tears gushed in a flood from his eyes.

The young man weeping, also, proceeded,—  
"I have not quite reported all yet. I am one of the sons of that widow, and I shall ever bless God for that tract, for, by reading it, my feet were directed in the way to heaven, and I am now going to conference to be proposed as a travelling preacher. My saddle-bags are half full of tracts, and I shall ever carry them with me, and scatter them in my course."

Reader, though you may consider yourself the feeblest child of God, here is a potent means of good which you can use daily. Have you small talents? Can you not speak with readiness for your Lord? Then carry with you these little messages of truth. Let them speak in your stead. You may thus scatter seed that may bring forth fruit, "some a hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty."

MY LIBRARY.

*"On booke for to rede I me delite,  
And to them give I faith and full credence,  
And in my heart have them in reverence."*—Chaucer.

IN all my changes I have kept sacredly my books. They are not two hundred in number, great and small, but include good specimens of the most valuable classes. How many happy hours do I owe to them! In many a long journey, on horseback, in the wilderness, have I beguiled the weary day by converse with a favourite author; and now that infirmities have compelled me to retire from my Master's work, these fast friends still cleave to me in my solitude, comforting and enlivening it by their instructive companionship. In sickness they have relieved me more than medicine, in sorrow they have been my solace, and in poverty my riches; and now, as I sit penning these lines, they are round about me, looking like the familiar faces of old friends, full of love, tried and true. "Blessed be God," said one, "for books;" and "they are not wise," said another, "who object to much reading." Like the men who write them, they are of all characters, but we may select them as we choose our friends.



and when once we select good ones, unlike men, they vary not, but are steadfast in their integrity.

I can never be solitary with good books about me ; a blessed society are they, ready at any moment to listen to our inquiries, and entertain us with their tranquil converse. By biographies, I can assemble round my winter hearth the men whose thoughts have stirred nations and impelled ages. While living, their company and conversations were enjoyed only by those who moved in the same sphere of life ; but in books they obey my bidding, and, divested of those forms of life which would only have embarrassed me, they become familiar friends, and teach me the lessons of their wisdom.

I have a few volumes of history. They crowd ages of existence into my evening hours ; fields, cities, realms, with their armies, arts, and revolutions pass before me, within my humble walls, like a magnificent drama.

I have books of travel. Though their authors are in their graves, I have only to open their pages, when, as by magic, they appear before me ; and I attend with breathless interest to the recital of their voyages, their adventures, the countries they visited, and all the scenes of novelty and marvel they witnessed. Thus in a

few hours I sail over seas, and travel over continents, enjoying all the pleasures and suffering none of the perils of the journey.

I have a few good volumes of poetry. The language of harmony and the bright ideals of genius are addressed by them to the deepest susceptibilities of my heart.

I have books of religion. In them, men who have gone up to heaven still instruct me in the way thither, and console me in the trials of my pilgrimage. And, above all, in my Bible I have an exhaustless treasure—the most simple and beautiful construction of the English language, the richest poetry, the most graphic portraits, the most interesting history, and the purest truth. Kings, prophets, and apostles move before me, and the visions and voices of the invisible world come down upon my soul.

If there were but one copy of any of the great literary works extant, one *Paradise Lost*, one *Pilgrim's Progress*, or, above all, one Bible, how would it be prized! What treasure would not be given for it! How happy would be esteemed the possessor! But are they less a blessing, because they may be obtained by the humblest man?

With such solace from books, it is not surprising that the love of reading, like the physical

appetites, grows by indulgence, and frequently assumes the intensity of a passion. "A taste for books," says Gibbon, "is the pleasure and glory of my life. I would not exchange it for the wealth of the Indies." Cicero says that he occupied himself with books at "home and abroad, in the city and the country, walking and riding." Pliny says that even in hunting, he employed his intervals in reading. And our earliest poet, Chaucer, has expressed a still stronger passion:

"But as for me, although I can but lite,\*  
On booke for to rede I me delite,  
And to them give I faithe and full credence,  
And in my heart have them in reverence;  
So heartily that there is game none  
That from my bookes meketh me to gone."

Thus books are sources of genuine *pleasure*. The mind, like the body, is formed for activity. In higher studies, its activity, though profitable, is laborious and painful, like the physical toil which excavates the golden mine; but in miscellaneous reading, while it is not without profit, it is also easy and delightful, like the pleasurable exercise of a walk amid the fresh breezes, the bright light, and varied charms of the landscape. As a relaxation from manual toil,

\* Know but little.

what can be more delicious than good books? In them the manifold scenes of life are painted, the affections of the heart are embalmed, the creations of the imagination are pictured, the gorgeous pageants of history revolve, the beauties of nature and the wonders of art are exhibited, the noblest thoughts of the noblest minds, the best sentiments of the best hearts, are treasured.

Books are our best companions. They change not, they forsake us not. They furnish us always the same faithful and sincere instructions. They are friends with whom we can converse in the loneliest solitude; and often have they gladdened the spirit of genius amid the damps of the prison cell, and the wretchedness of the garret. Well could the immortal author of the "Faerie Queene," in the neglect and want of his latter years, sing,—

"However men may me despise and spite,  
I feed on such contentment of good thought,  
And please myself with mine own self-delight,  
In contemplating things heavenly wrought;  
And loathing earth, I look to yonder sky,  
And being driven hence, I thither fly."

Books are the prime means of *intellectual improvement*, and no insignificant instruments of *moral influence*. Various reading has been

condemned as unfavourable to mental vigour and originality. It has been said that perhaps the ancients owed much of their excellence to the fact, that they had fewer books than we, and, therefore, read less and thought more ; and even in their scarcity of literary works, one of them advised the studious youth of Rome to read much, but read *few* books. The advice is certainly pertinent, but may be much qualified. It is unquestionable that the most powerful minds have been distinguished for extensive research. Fisher Ames said that the largest library in the United States, in his day, did not equal the number of works referred to as authorities in Gibbon's "Decline and Fall." Some of the most distinguished English writers have been various and voracious readers. Bacon was a great reader as well as a great observer and thinker, and his own quaint remark suggests the manner in which he avoided any evil from the indulgence : "Some books," said he, "are to be tasted, some swallowed, and some few chewed and digested." Not only do individual instances confirm the position, but the most intellectual nation of the age presents an example of the most various and minute research, combined with the most profound *originality*. Bibliomania is the very genius of

a German student. Nature has provided an endless variety for the nourishment of man, and it is not the meagre and unvarying use of her blessings which invigorates ; the healthy may enjoy them abundantly, provided they be seasonable and temperate.

But however strong may be the objections to the miscellaneous use of books by professed students, they do not apply to the popular mind. The mass of the people have neither the disposition nor the convenience for mental *discipline*. With them there is but one alternative,—either to reap the slight improvements, but genuine pleasures, of occasional and desultory reading, or suffer the inanition or worse accompaniments of an habitual neglect of books. But though their improvement by such a course be but slight, compared with the effects of systematic study, yet, in itself considered, it is vast. The inert faculties are awakened ; the tendency of the uniform and minutely-divided mechanic arts to stint the mind is relieved ; the delightful instinct of taste is called into play ; the languid imagination is vivified, and the judgment exercised. A mechanic who is accustomed to spend an hour or two daily in judicious reading, will show its effects in his whole bearing. It may awaken within him no peculiar energy, it

may impart no new talent, but it will give a better tone to his ordinary powers, and greater purity to his common sentiments ; and it will, almost invariably, so far modify his whole character, as to distinguish him from the mass of his class. If the vast thousands of the Russian empire were not only taught to read, but inspired with a love of reading, and supplied with domestic libraries, who doubts that, in a few years, a miracle of national improvement would follow ? Who doubts that every national aspect would be transformed, and the whole realm lifted up as by its four corners ? The efficacy of such an experiment would be second only to that of a pure religious faith.

The *moral influence* of popular reading is invaluable. The maxim that

“ A little learning is a dangerous thing,”

may be true (though not without much qualification) when applied to the scientific and the would-be learned, but it is altogether fallacious in respect to popular intelligence. The people are not speculative ; they are not generally vain ; they are frank, confiding, implicit. Though the chief sufferers by religious or political errors, yet are they seldom their originators. They have too little presumption to disbelieve *received truths*, and too much common sense to

propound theoretical absurdities ; if they cannot be learned, still they may be intelligent without danger. Their intelligence is the conservative virtue of society. It is not the influence of the highly learned which preserves a community from the corruptions of error, but the aggregate intelligence of the middling classes. If religion is the salt of the earth, this is a part of its savour—it always coexists with genuine religion, and cannot exist without it.

Books are good means of *domestic enjoyment and virtue* ; and if ever there comes a golden age of popular intelligence, its indication will be the *domestic library*, not scattered amid the rubbish of shelves, or concealed in the privacy of a closet, but placed prominently in the parlour as its most esteemed furniture. Next to the beautiful scene of domestic worship, what is more delightful than the sight of a family plying at the fireside the light tasks of the evening, listening to the voice of the reader, and varying the tranquil scene by conversational remarks ? A love of books thus inspired in the minds of the young, may have the most salutary influence on their coming years. It may develop the latent energies of genius, or quicken and attemper the aspirations of early virtue and piety. The mechanic, with such an attraction



at his hearth, will learn to despise the gross pleasures of vice and conviviality ; and the affluent and the educated will find in such a combination of the pleasures of the mind with the affections of the heart, one of the most elevated delights of life. A distinguished living writer gives an example in the history of the lamented *Princess Charlotte* :—" She and her consort, Prince Leopold, lived together in the greatest harmony and affection ; and, from what her biographers have stated respecting her education and pursuits, it appears that the mutual friendship of these illustrious individuals was heightened and cemented by the rational conversation in which they indulged, and the elevated studies to which they were devoted. Her course of education embraced the English, classical, French, German, and Italian languages ; arithmetic, geography, astronomy, the first six books of Euclid, algebra, mechanics, and the principles of optics and perspective, with history, the policy of governments, and particularly the principles of the Christian religion. She was also a skilful musician, had a fine conception of the picturesque in nature, and was fond of drawing. She took great pleasure in strolling on the beach, in marine excursions, in walking in the country, in rural scenery, in

conversing freely with the rustic inhabitants, and in investigating every object which seemed worthy of her attention. She was an enthusiastic admirer of the grand and beautiful in nature, and the ocean was to her an object of peculiar interest. After her union with the prince, as their tastes were similar, they engaged in the same studies. Gardening, drawing, music, and rational conversation, diversified their leisure hours. They took great pleasure in the culture of flowers, in the classification of them, and in the formation, with scientific skill, of a *hortus siccus*. But the *library*, which was furnished with the best books in our language, was their favourite place of resort; and their chief daily pleasure was mutual instruction. They were seldom apart, either in their occupations or in their amusements; nor were they separated in their religious duties. ‘They took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company;’ and it is also stated, on good authority, that they maintained the worship of God in their family, which was regularly attended by every branch of their household. No wonder, then, that they exhibited an auspicious and a delightful example of private and domestic virtue, of *conjugal attachment*, and of unobtrusive charity and benevolence.”

## MIGHTY MEN.

*"We shall reap if we faint not."*—St. Paul.

THE truly mighty men of history were made such more by industry than by genius. Let the lesson be well learned by the young. There have been great men who were not able men—fictitiously great; their greatness arising more from their fortunate circumstances than from themselves; but the truly great have generally been the "labouring classes" of their respective departments, genuine workmen. The young man who does not feel strongly within him the disposition to *work*, may entertain no high ambition for usefulness or eminence.

Dr. Samuel Clarke said the old adage of "too many irons in the fire conveys an abominable old lie; have all in, shovel, tongs, and poker." It is not so much the multiplicity of employments, as the want of system in them, that disturbs and injures both the work and workman. Wesley did everything by system; and how much did he achieve? He travelled about five thousand miles a year, preached about three times a day, beginning at five o'clock in the morning, and his published works amount to about two hundred volumes.

Asbury travelled about six thousand miles a year, and preached incessantly. Coke crossed the Atlantic eighteen times, preached, wrote, travelled, established missions, begged from door to door for them, and laboured in all respects as if, like the apostles, he would "turn the world upside down." At nearly seventy years of age he started to Christianize India! Baxter, with numerous and grievous diseases, wrote a surprising number of books, practised physic, and, as he took no fees, was oppressed with patients; spent two days a week in catechetical instruction, and, besides special sermons and several regular evening services, preached three times a week. Calvin, tortured with gout, stranguary, stone, catarrh, and other infirmities, acted, while in Geneva, as pastor and professor, wrote nine folio volumes, with profound thought, corresponded with all parts of the continent, every other day lectured, and every other week preached daily. He states, in one of his letters, the work of one day while at Strasburgh. It consists of a sermon, a lecture, the correction of twenty sheets of manuscript, four letters, besides offices of advice and reconciliation in more than a dozen cases. Luther was one of the most extensive writers of his age. He maintained an immense cor-

respondence, the published part filling numerous volumes, lectured regularly before the university, preached nearly every day, bore the chief burden of the churches, fought emperor, pope, and council, lived constantly in the agitation of controversy, and yet found leisure for the enjoyments of domestic life, and the recreations of music and poetry. Nearly all these wonderful men were also oppressed with poverty. Wesley left not more than ten pounds for his funeral expences ; Asbury received not two dollars a week, besides his entertainment and travelling expenses ; Baxter received sixty pounds a year ; Calvin sold his books to pay his rent ; and Luther had to beg a coat of the elector.

“Labour conquers all things,” was a maxim worthy of the nation which conquered the world. It is the testimony of almost all literary biography, that intellectual greatness is most commonly found, at first, in obscurity and poverty. In the higher walks of life, where the pleasures and honours of opulence pamper the sensuality and flatter the vanity of the mind, it is seldom capable of those high aspirations, which lead to intellectual eminence—while in poverty and obscurity it is dependant upon its own resources. It must remain unhonoured, or rise by the might of its own energy. It acquires

in such circumstances one quality, at least, which lies at the foundation of all true greatness of mind, *a noble sense of self-dependance*.

Nearly all the great names, conspicuous on the catalogue of renown, are proofs of the success of mind in contending with difficulties.

Metastasios, a friendless lad, singing verses in the streets, became one of the greatest authors in Italian literature. Gifford, the cabin boy, was one of the most powerful writers of his age. Epictetus, the moralist, was born a slave, but became the boast of the stoical sect of philosophers, and the intimate friend of the best emperors of Rome. Ferguson was a shepherd's boy, but raised himself to the honour of the first astronomer of his age, at whose lectures royalty itself listened with delight. Murray was a shepherd's boy, but he became one of the first instructors of mankind. Brown, the author of the Commentary, Concordance, and Bible Dictionary, was likewise a shepherd's boy. Terence was an African slave, but raised himself to such an elevation that the haughty consuls of Rome courted his society. Franklin, the printer, became one of the first men of his age. Sir Humphrey Davy, the son of a wood-carver, and the apprentice of an apothecary, became the first chemist of his times. Colum-

bus, the sailor, left a new world for his memorial. Roger Sherman, the statesman of the American Revolution, was a shoemaker. Herschel, the great astronomer, was a British soldier in Nova Scotia; he commenced the study of astronomy while watching on the sentry post at night, and has fixed his name among the orbs. Samuel Lee was a carpenter, but became a professor of Hebrew in Cambridge University, England. Adam Clarke was the son of a country schoolmaster, but rose to be one of the first Biblical scholars of modern times. Robert Hall was the son of a poor dissenting minister; he became one of the most splendid orators of the British pulpit, and one of the best writers of the English language. Cuvier, the greatest of modern naturalists, was the son of a pensioned soldier, and a charity scholar at college. Prideaux, the author of the "Connections," and bishop of Worcester, could not be kept at school by his poor parents, longer than to learn to read and write, and he obtained the rest of his education by walking to Oxford and obtaining employment in the kitchen of Exeter College.

Nearly the whole list of worthies on the record of literary fame were thus diamonds found in the mire—pearls brought up from the depths of obscurity—men who, but for their

own energy, would have passed away, with the mass of mankind, "little and unknown."

The most essential requisite for the pursuit of knowledge, under such circumstances, is *unyielding determination*. This is of such great importance, as almost to make up for deficiency in any other respect. It is truly wonderful what this noble quality has accomplished. The history of literature is full of its miracles. In cases where ordinary intellects would quail in despair, minds nerved with this high energy of purpose have seemed only to gather new strength, have wrought themselves into a kind of omnipotency which has swept away the most appalling difficulties, and enabled them to trample into the dust the most formidable obstacles. It is, even in many cases, preferable to genius. Genius is morbid, erratic, burning too often in fitful gleams, or with too intense ardour, so as to consume itself. It is brilliant like a meteor, but has no fixed laws to keep it steady. Genius frequently leads to disregard of the means of improvement, and thereby disappoints its own hopes. But an ordinary mind, strengthened with this lofty resolve, is regular in its progress; it may be slow, but it is sure. It does not rush onward, breathless and wild, like a frantic maniac,



but moves with majestic calmness, stepping always on a sure position, and surveying the way as it goes. Genius is fit for extra circumstances only; a determined though ordinary mind is common place. It is practical, and can handle common things. Genius is like the precious gold ore, which is adapted to shine, a pretty thing, an ornament for the finger or ear, or fit for the nice workmanship of a watch; a common mind nerved with resolution is like the ruder but more useful ore of iron, fit alike for a steam engine, an artillery piece to hurl its blazing thunder, or a gleaming sword. Genius is a fragile flower which blooms beautifully and fades easily; a practical but determined mind can grow up in the storm, like the oak, spread its limbs to battle with the winds, and though it may be shorn of its "leafy honours" by the wintry blast, yet its roots are deep in the earth, its branches strong, and when the summer returns it thrives as vigorously as ever.

I have met somewhere with a noble passage on the subject; it is evidently the opinion of a master mind: "More is to be expected from laborious mediocrity than from the erratic efforts of a wayward genius. Demosthenes elaborated sentence after sentence, and Newton rose to

the heavens by the steps of geometry, and said, at the close of his career, that it was only in the habit of patient thinking he was conscious of differing from other men. It is generally thought that men are signalized more by talent than by industry ; it is felt to be a vulgarizing of genius to attribute it to anything but direct inspiration from Heaven ; they overlook the steady and persevering devotion of mind to one subject. There are higher and lower walks in scholarship, but the highest is a walk of labour. We are often led into a contrary opinion by looking at the magnitude of the object in its finished state, such as the ' Principia' of Newton, and the pyramids of Egypt, without reflecting on the gradual, continuous, I had almost said, creeping progress by which they grew into objects of the greatest magnificence in the literary and physical world. In the one case, indeed, we may fancy the chisel which wrought each successive stone, but in the other we cannot trace the process by which the philosopher was raised from one landing-place to another, till he soared to his towering elevation ; it seems as if the work was produced at the bidding of a magician. But Newton has left, as a legacy, the assurance, that he did not attain his elevation by a heaven-born in-

aspiration, out of the reach of many, but by dint of a homely virtue within the reach of all."

Reader, art thou a young man struggling against difficulties for improvement and usefulness? Hold up then bravely thy head, when the surge rolls over thee. Knowest thou not that the energy which works within thee is the measure of thy capability; that whatsoever thou wilt thou canst achieve, if not interdicted by the laws of thy being? Look, then, on obstacles with an unblinking eye. Most of the good and the great of all ages have been thy fellows in suffering, and thou mayest be theirs in success. Despond not; good counsellors will tell thee to be humble; their counsel is wise; but remember humility is not a fiction; it is the right estimate of thyself, not depreciation. Humility is strength. She is brave. She has lifted many a time her meek eye serenely in the flames of the stake. Be humble, then, but be strong in thy heart. Thy soul is an exhaustless energy, the wide world is open for thine action, and voices from earth and heaven summon thee to dare and to do.

## JACK AND HIS MASTER.

*"Bless them that curse you."*—Christ.

Two of these sketches have already related to the influence of religion on the negro character. Many more might be given. It has been no small happiness of my ministerial life to preach often to these lowly children of Ham. I have found among them some of the best disciples of my Master—"living epistles." Whatever may be the defects of the African mind, it is not deficient in the moral and social affections. Religion takes profound hold of it, and enlivens it with a spiritual vivacity which I have often seen spreading the smiles of gladness over its most abject depressions.

Though constitutionally timid, I have known them to endure "fiery trials" for Christ with a meek fortitude which has subdued the violence of persecution. I have somewhere met with an affecting instance, but cannot recall its source or authority, and cannot, therefore, vouch for its truth; but it is so characteristic and so accordant with my knowledge of the negro heart when influenced by the love of Christ, as to give it strong probability. It is the case of a slave who became a local preacher, and in one of his sermons relates the story as follows :—

"When I was a lad there were no religious people near where I lived. But I had a young master about my age, who was going to school, and he was very fond of me. At night he would come into the kitchen to teach me the lesson he had learned himself during the day at school. In this way I learned to read.

"When I was well nigh grown up, we took up the New Testament, and agreed to read it verse by verse. When one would make a mistake the other was to correct him, so that we could learn to read well.

"In a short time we both felt that we were sinners before God, and we both agreed to seek the salvation of our souls. The Lord heard our prayer, and gave us both a hope in Christ. Then I began to hold meetings for prayer and exhortation among the coloured people.

"My old master soon found out what was going on. He was very angry, especially because his son had become pious. He forbid my holding any more meetings, saying, that if I did, he would whip me severely for it.

"From that time I continued to preach or exhort on sabbaths and sabbath nights; and on Monday morning my old master would tie me up, and cut my back to pieces with a cowhide, that it had never time to get well. I was

obliged to do my work in a great deal of pain from day to day.

"Thus I lived near a year and a half. One Monday morning my master, as usual, had made my fellow-slaves tie me to a shade-tree in the yard, after stripping my back naked to receive the cowhide. It was a beautiful morning in the summer time, and the sun shone very bright. Everything around looked very pleasant. He came up to me with cool deliberation, took his stand, and looked at me closely, but the cowhide hung still at his side. His conscience was at work, and it was a great moment in his life.

" 'Well, Jack,' said he, 'your back is covered all over with scars and sores, and I see no place to begin to whip. You obstinate wretch, how long do you intend to go on in this way?'

" 'Why, master, just as long as the Lord will let me live,' was my reply.

" 'Well, what is your design in it?'

" 'Why, master, in the morning of the resurrection, when my poor body shall rise from the grave, I intend to show these scars to my heavenly Father, as so many witnesses of my faithfulness in his cause.'

"He ordered them to untie me, and sent me to hoe corn in the field. Late in the evening he

came along, pulling a weed here, and a weed there, till he got to me, and then told me to sit down.

“ ‘ Jack,’ said he, ‘ I want you to tell me the truth. You know that for a long time your back has been sore from the cowhide ; you have had to work very hard, and are a poor slave. Now tell me, are you happy or not, under such troubles as these ?’

“ ‘ Yes, master, I believe I am as happy a man as there is on earth.’

“ ‘ Well, Jack,’ said he, ‘ I am not happy. Religion, you say, teaches you to pray for those that injure you. Now, will you pray for your old master, Jack ?’

“ ‘ Yes, with all my heart,’ said I.

“ We kneeled down, and I prayed for him. He came again and again to me. I prayed for him in the field, till he found peace in the blood of the Lamb. After this we lived together like brothers in the same church. On his death-bed he gave me my liberty, and told me to go on preaching as long as I lived, and meet him at last in heaven.

“ I have seen,” said Jack, “ many Christians whom I loved, but I have never seen any I loved so well as my old master. I hope I shall meet him in heaven.”

# RELIGIOUS CHEERFULNESS.

*"Always rejoicing."*—Paul.

IT is one of those commands which may be considered as more commendatory than imperative, when the apostle says, "*Rejoice evermore.*" Yet no one can doubt that not only the general spirit, but the express letter of the gospel, favours a happy, and even joyful temper. No one who reads the Scriptures with a direct reference to this point can be unconscious of the fact, that while they may not unqualifiedly condemn dejection, they nevertheless discountenance it, as not only foreign to religion, but generally hostile to it. How infatuated, then, the impression of many, especially among the young, that spiritual-mindedness is essentially sombre!

Look for a moment at the *spirit* of true religion. Gloom and severity of mind usually associate with misanthropy; but the central element of religion is *love*—love intense, supreme, ever-growing. Remorse is a painful source of mental misery; yet it is chiefly by the absence of *hope* that the mind languishes. What a terrible word is *despair*; yet its most fearful import is *hopelessness*. But how full of fruition is the



future to a Christian mind—endless, boundless fruition ! Repose your thoughts a moment on the strong language of the Scriptures : “ A good hope,” “ a lively hope,” “ a blessed hope,” “ rejoicing in hope,” “ abounding in hope,” “ full assurance of hope.” Choose any other attribute essential to the mental frame of the Christian, and you will find it in contrast with gloom ; as much so as the star is with the darkness in which it shines.

Assuredly there can be found nothing in the *practical system* of Christianity which is repugnant to a happy temper. How pure are its ordinances ; how simple and tranquil its worship ; how befitting and coincident with our daily cares, its duties ! Christianity is indeed a *discipline* ; it imposes self-denial. It has its “ burden,” but its burden is “ light ;” it has its “ yoke,” but its yoke is “ easy.”

What, then, are the causes of the not unfrequent depression met with among Christians ?

It may be remarked in reply, first, that physical causes often contribute to it. Let not this be deemed an unimportant observation. We are not assured that it is not the chief cause of mental sufferings among those who are genuine Christians. It should be borne in mind that a conformity to the moral laws of our being does

not supersede obedience to the physical and organic laws: and that while we reap the rewards of obedience in the one case, we may be suffering the penalties of transgression in the other. The Christian should aim at perfection in all respects. Some of our strongest temptations are connected with physical circumstances. We should therefore include our bodily health among our moral duties.

Again: no doubt much of the depression of the Christian arises from the remains of sin. Every drop of gall has its bitterness. The only resource here is, to seize St. Paul's remedy, "*Go on to perfection.*" Holiness is essential to happiness. There never was a truer and loftier maxim. Even what you may consider small sins, must ever interfere, while they are indulged, with your peace. Needles can pierce deeper than larger instruments. A secret sin is often more injurious to the soul than an overt or gross crime. It has a character of concealment, of hypocrisy, that makes it more degrading. Are you habitually or occasionally unhappy, Christian reader? Look now deliberately into your heart, and see if the cause is not obvious. Perhaps the greatest curse your heavenly Father could inflict upon you would be a happy frame of mind while you are omitting,

it may be forgetting, his command that you "be perfect, even as he is perfect." How amazing is the undoubted fact, that many Christians shrink from this command, because they fear that the higher responsibility and minuter fidelity of a sanctified state will form a servitude in which they will be unhappy! Young Christian, bethink you! Is such a fancy found on the page of God's word? Is the shadowy twilight more brilliant than the full glory of the day? How superlatively wretched heaven must be, if you are correct! Christian perfection is indeed a high state, and its watchfulness and fidelity are correspondently great; but it is a state of extraordinary *grace*, as well as of extraordinary *duty*. It is perfect *love* that "*casts out fear*." Is it not, then, on the mere score of enjoyment, preferable to an inferior degree of piety? Would you be *glad* with joy? Would you triumph over care and anxiety, and sin and death; and, above all, over yourself and the devil? Would you have the perfection of all the happiness to be enjoyed in this world? Abandon sin. Fly from sin. Abhor it; shudder at it. Look upon its smallest stain as upon the plague spot.

Again. Are not we Christians wondrously thoughtless? Do we not walk amidst the outstanding, the blazing glories of our blessed

region, like the blind man beneath the starry grandeur of the firmament, or amid the effulgence of the sun? Does not the want of a *meditative habit* lead to that vacancy and cheerlessness of mind which we often feel? When we open God's word in an hour of gloom, it ought to be to us like a sun outbursting from the heaven in midnight. How full of clear counsel, and happy words, and radiant doctrine, and sweet assurance, and bounding hope, is it? O, it is indeed the *gospel*—good and glad tidings. How every passage dilates and palpitates with unutterable mercy and love! “Glory in the highest,” shouted the angels when they announced it over Bethlehem; and so should we respond, whenever we look at it.

Young Christian, try to *think* as well as to *feel*. What mind, not absolutely in a state of fatuity, can habitually meditate upon the great topics of revealed religion, and be miserable and drivelling? Select any one of its essential doctrines, and you have what might be the text of an angel's study, and that study protracted through eternity. What a conception is the character of its God! What a topic the atonement! How full of confidence and assurance the truth of a special providence! How relieving and consoling the fact of justification

by faith ! How sublime the resurrection ! and how all-glorious the truth of "immortality and eternal life !" Christian, if the gospel is true, God, even God, loves *you* ! His Son died for *you* ; angels guard *you* ; devils quail before *you* ; death drops his sceptre at *your* approach ; the grave fades away at *your* feet ; time will grow oblivious, and worlds waste into nothingness, while *you* but pass through your intellectual infancy ! Lift up your hands, then, and bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Disdain your trivial trials, and blush to think that the possessor of all these "riches of glory" should have ever hung his head a moment in despondence.

## TOO LATE.

*"He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."*

Solomon.

ONE of the most remarkable outpourings of the Spirit of God I ever witnessed, was at a quarterly meeting in L——. In those days, and especially in that wilderness region, quarterly meetings were the high festivals of the church. They continued at least two days, the people assembled from many miles around, and most of the neighbouring farm-houses were thrown open for the hospitable entertainment of the throng.

The services commenced early on Saturday morning, and continued without intermission, except for sleep at night, till ten o'clock Sunday evening. The venerable father O. preached the first sermon with resistless power. The windows of heaven were opened, and a blessing poured out, such as we could not contain: the crowded house, and the throngs outside, about the doors and windows, seemed spell-bound. Sinners trembled and wept, and the people of God shouted for joy. During all that day and the next, prayer meetings and love-feasts occupied the intervals of the sermons, and while one

portion of the labourers went to their meals or reposed themselves, another supplied their places. Thirty-four persons professed to have passed from death unto life during the two days, and many others were awakened. My heart kindles afresh as I think of that blessed occasion. There is but one melancholy recollection connected with it, which I record for the warning of others.

Mr. G., a pious and laborious local preacher, came with his wife, son, and two daughters, more than ten miles, to that meeting, with particular reference to the salvation of his son, who had been the subject of his paternal prayers for more than eighteen years, and was the only one of his family that remained unsaved. During these years he had often been deeply convicted of sin, but resistance had become habitual, and the aged parent was fearful that the habit would become confirmed and fatal. It deeply affects me even now to recall the tears and prayers of the good old man in behalf of his son during the meeting. While others rejoiced at the penitent throngs that pressed around the altar for prayers, he wept for the child of his love who appeared not among them.

There is sometimes danger of too much importunity in personal conversations on religion

with our impenitent friends. Such is the natural perversity of the human heart, that unless we are cautious our appeals will only throw them into an attitude of self-defence, a studied resistance of religious impressions—a habit most hardening to the heart. The anxious father was fully aware of this danger: during the meeting he was affectionately earnest, but not too frequent in his conversations with the young man. He prayed incessantly for him, and trusted to the influence of the public means of grace. One exercise after another passed, but with no visible effect on his mind. The sabbath afternoon had arrived, and scores were weeping at the altar, when the anxious parent came to request me to seek out his child and faithfully converse with him.

I found him, urged him to immediate repentance, and recommended him to place himself among the mourning group at the altar.

“The Scriptures do not require me to go to the altar,” he answered, “and can I not receive religion elsewhere as well as there?”

“Yes,” I replied, “the Lord can save you where you now stand, or anywhere else, if you earnestly seek him, but what place can be more appropriate for those who earnestly seek him than the altar of his sanctuary? We



baptize our children there; there we receive candidates into his church, and perform the solemnities of marriage, and the obsequies of the dead; it is a holy place, and why is it not appropriate that our first religious vows should be taken there? There is, indeed, no special virtue in the altar, but by going to it you will place yourself in a position to receive more directly the prayers and counsels of God's people. You will also thereby own yourself on the Lord's side, and break at once that dangerous diffidence which has ruined thousands. I do not say that you cannot obtain religion without going to the altar, but I do say that you will never obtain it until you overcome those feelings which prevent your going: you never can obtain it till you are sufficiently humbled to receive it anywhere, or at any sacrifice."

I spent half an hour in reasoning with him. He treated me with great respect, acknowledged his necessity of religion, but suggested a thousand difficulties. I left him with the painful conviction that, amidst all the wonderful influences of the occasion, he had succeeded in keeping his conscience asleep.

The meeting closed on Sunday night. On Monday morning, as I passed to my next appointment, I found the road enlivened with the

horses and vehicles of the returning multitude. After riding four miles I perceived a throng about a farm-house, before me. I rode rapidly to it, and learned that a young man had been thrown from his horse and dangerously injured. I passed through the crowd to the chamber where they had placed the sufferer, and found the young man whom I had warned so emphatically the day before. He was shockingly injured, and as I entered the room a thrill of dismay seemed to pass over him. A physician soon arrived and pronounced the case hopeless, and declared that he could not survive two hours. Never shall I forget the agonized countenance of the wretched youth when he learned his fate.

"Must I die?" he exclaimed: "Is there no hope? O I cannot die! I cannot die!" I endeavoured to direct him to the cross, and reminded him of the crucified thief.

"Alas!" he replied, "he never sinned against such light as I have abused. What shall I do? Pray for me, O pray for me!"

We knelt down about the chamber, but his agonizing groans struck all with horror and confusion. I rose and endeavoured again to direct him to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.

"*It is too late!*" he exclaimed, "O what

would I not give if I had heeded your warning yesterday, but it is now too late; I am lost! I am lost!"

His parents and sisters soon arrived; but the scene which followed I will not and cannot describe. The groans of the poor sufferer ceased only with his life, which occurred during the morning. He seemed stunned by the sudden and unexpected summons, and unable to command his thoughts sufficiently to pray. Who can describe the feelings of that poor dying youth! Who can imagine them! His body in agony, his life reduced to a few hours, and no preparation for eternity!

Reader! be ye ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the summons may come!

"Reflect, thou hast a soul to save,  
Thy sins, how high they mount!  
What are thy hopes beyond the grave?  
How stands that dark account?"

Death enters, and there's no defence;  
His time there's none can tell:  
He'll in a moment call thee hence,  
To heaven or down to hell!"



